

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1401207



The Library  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE  
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

Id Tesdo alf.

Read to p. 136

Induced to p. 136





ANDREW HALLIDAY DOUGLAS







1900

*From a photograph by Mr. Webster, Edinburgh*

1178  
Co.  
=5

ANDREW HALLIDAY DOUGLAS

FIVE SERMONS

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

BY

CHARLES DOUGLAS, M.P.

LONDON

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

27, PATERNOSTER ROW

1903



Theology Library  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT  
California

---

*Printed by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd., London and Aylesbury.*

## PREFACE

THE purpose of this volume is to furnish my brother's friends with a memorial of his life. It is addressed to them rather than to other readers.

Five of his sermons have been selected for publication. Of these, the first two were preached on the occasion of his last visit to Cambridge a few weeks before his death ; the third was preached ten years earlier in Huntly, and printed by him at the request of his congregation there ; and the two remaining sermons have been chosen as characteristic pulpit discussions of large subjects.

A note of introduction to the sermons has been contributed by the Rev. R. S. Simpson, minister of the High Church in Edinburgh, to whom I am under many obligations in connection with the preparation of this book.

CHARLES DOUGLAS.

## CONTENTS

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH . . . . .	3
-------------------------------	---

### SERMONS

INTRODUCTORY NOTE . . . . .	125
-----------------------------	-----

SPRING IN THE SOUL . . . . .	139
------------------------------	-----

THE RELIGION OF JOY . . . . .	173
-------------------------------	-----

PUBLIC SPIRIT . . . . .	211
-------------------------	-----

THE WORD MADE FLESH . . . . .	249
-------------------------------	-----

ATONEMENT . . . . .	285
---------------------	-----

Theology Library  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT  
California



# Biographical Sketch



## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

THIS record of the life of Andrew Halliday Douglas is not in any strict sense a biography. It does not narrate matters of general or public interest: the career which it commemorates was not marked by striking outward events or by great changes, and indeed seemed only to have begun. It is intended to give an account of the stages of mental and spiritual growth through which its subject passed; to convey, to those who were the friends of his early days in Edinburgh, a fuller knowledge of the aspirations and the efforts that lay beneath the surface of his

quiet life, and of what befell him afterwards; and to tell those who saw him later something of the process through which he attained the qualities they knew in him.

It is not necessary, for this purpose, to record in detail the earlier events of his life. Those, indeed, who knew him in his youngest days will always be apt to think of him still as a boy, and to remember him on Highland hills, or by the burns and lochs, or in the tense seriousness of his schoolboy work; and this is the more natural because he always kept so much of the spirit of youth—its simple happiness, its impulsive tenderness, its readiness to form new friendships, its unspoiled capacity for admiration, and, above all, a gay, courageous hopefulness that carried him through difficulties and depressions to the

end. In the early close of his life the spirit of the morning was with him still. But of the events of his boyhood there is no need to speak. Born in 1864, in Edinburgh, he was a son of Dr. Andrew Halliday Douglas, a physician in that city, and of Jessie, daughter of Dr. Kenneth Mackinnon, one of a family long resident at Broadford, in the Isle of Skye. His earliest years were overshadowed by his mother's death when he was six years old ; and by this he was the more thrown on the care of his father, whose busiest days were never too busy for the companionship of his sons. It would be impossible to speak of his early home life more fittingly than in words of his own, written when he went to undertake his first pastoral work in 1888.

My home [he writes] has in many respects been



a remarkable one. My father's spirit has ruled it altogether—his vigorous mind, his wide interest, his intense but undemonstrative affection, his stern honour, his deep and tried piety, his unequalled self-forgetfulness. Then, the comparative absence of womanly influence has accented the repression and almost monastic closeness of our family life. We have all been always busy ; our general society has been sought outside ; and we have often gone separate ways. Our home talk has been very often on grave subjects, I remember now, though not dull or solemn. All this has changed a little ; but I think my two brothers' characters, and my own, were formed in such an atmosphere. But when I say I leave my home, I really mean I lose the constant, everyday friendship of my father.

In nothing was his father's care more zealously exercised than in his religious training, not only through the agency of the Church, but more constantly and directly at home. In later years he was always mindful of the effect and value to him of the religious atmosphere of his home, and

in his pastoral work was an earnest advocate of early religious training

It may, I think, be said that Christian training is never altogether thrown away—never goes altogether without its effect. These early impressions are never quite effaced, for even when we do not see the full result, there is yet, in all cases, produced a certain seriousness.

To him, I think, all this was not a familiar commonplace, but a vivid recollection.

For the rest, that which the years fulfilled in him was promised early. He was diligent in work, and, though no conspicuous athlete in school, he had an eager pleasure, which he never lost, in things out-of-doors. In his school-days he formed friendships to which time and distance did not make him less loyal. Simple sincerity and purity of spirit foretold those qualities which made him afterwards a pastor and a

teacher. Those who knew him only in mature years may find it hard to realise that, as a boy, he was beset by a violence of temper, which only after much effort yielded to his self-control.

He was educated, with his brother Kenneth (now a physician in Edinburgh), first at a private school, and afterwards at the Edinburgh Academy. From an early stage in his school life it was plain that his aptitude lay rather in the direction of literature than of mathematics or science. In classical studies he was distinguished; and he laid at school the foundations of his riper scholarship.

Perhaps of all his work at school, that which left the deepest impression on his mind was a special study which he made of Boswell's Life of Johnson and the period

of literature to which that book opens the broadest avenue of approach. A private reading of Boswell had been suggested as a voluntary task; and he pursued it with an interest perhaps remarkable at his age, and certainly of permanent advantage to himself. It not only gave him a life-long pleasure, but also a kind of training in literature not always gained at school.

In 1880 he passed from school to the Arts Faculty in the University of Edinburgh. Methods and men alike, in that Faculty, are changed since his day. At that time, and for nearly ten years afterwards, the Arts course followed the time-honoured plan, by which Latin and Greek were studied in the first year, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Logic in the second, and Moral Philosophy and

English Literature in the third, without those alternatives which subsequent arrangements have offered.

The men, too, are almost all changed. Professor Chrystal, indeed, still adorns the chair which he had then recently come to occupy. But the others who were professors at that time are all gone from their places. There was then the illustrious Tait; Sellar still gave to those who could receive it the impulse towards a high scholarship; and Blackie taught many things besides Greek. Of more direct and fresh interest to Halliday Douglas was the work of others—of Calderwood, the genial and sagacious, and of Professor Campbell Fraser and Professor Masson, living now in honoured retirement. These were the teachers of that time.

In other ways too, no less than in the



order of its studies and in the personalities of its teachers, the University of Edinburgh is changed since 1880. There was then much less than there is now of social life within it; and it was easy and natural for students to form small cliques or groups knowing little of those outside their immediate circles. Perhaps it is not matter for surprise that this should have happened at first, to some extent, to the group of Academy boys who went to the University in 1880, and that Halliday Douglas should only later have found his way into the general life of the University. After an early stage in his Arts course, however, he became deeply interested in the debating societies of the University—first the “Diagnostic,” and later the “Philosophical,” long since extinct, but then vigorous, and the home of a keen intellectual life. At a still

later stage he joined the Speculative Society, within the walls of the University, though not of the number of its societies; and both of it and of the Philosophical Society he was an active member for years after he had left the University. In these societies he enlarged, as all men do, the circle of his friends; and he gained a skill in public speaking which stood him afterwards in good stead.

In the first two years of his Arts course Halliday Douglas remained, I think, very much in the mood and temper of a partially liberated schoolboy. The plane of his life was not altered: its enthusiasms had not begun. The days were filled with much good-fellowship, a reasonable amount of amusement, and, with it all, diligence in work, and a widening intellectual horizon. Gladstone's "Midlothian campaign" stirred

in him a keen political interest, and gave him the first realisation of the Liberalism which continued to be his political creed throughout his life.

Yet, so far, all his interests were detached; and his diligence was little more than the dutiful but uninspired docility of a boy. His work was done precisely, carefully, laboriously; but no intellectual passion had yet begun to concentrate the forces of his life, to rouse his deeper interest, or to mould his character. He found himself, indeed, aimless and lacking anything that should employ the growing seriousness of his mind.

It was in 1882 that the tides of his intellectual and spiritual life began to run more strongly. During the earlier part of that year he was too much occupied in the uncongenial task of preparing for

the degree examination in mathematics to enter keenly into the work of the logic class which he attended. But in the succeeding summer he began to awaken to the speculative interests which were afterwards to govern his life. His was not a mind to which pure scholarship formed in itself an adequate occupation. At a later stage of his student life, and increasingly in the years that followed, his interest in history and literature and his scholarship itself became broader and more definite. But his temper was never that of a grammarian; and in the middle of his University course his interest in classical studies had somewhat waned, and they had begun to seem objectless. A certain intellectual listlessness grew out of the fact that his mind had not been directed to the close appreciation of problems whose

existence—felt as yet rather than fully realised—had begun to destroy his interest in more external studies.

It was in this state of mind that, in the summer of 1882, he began to read Carlyle. Every generation has its own way of approaching the problem of philosophy. At present the influence of Carlyle in the Universities is slight. Twenty years ago it was very great; and from that cause as well as from others there arose a moral seriousness and a sense of the issues of personal life which gave zest to the study of philosophy. To Halliday Douglas, at this particular stage of his career, the reading of Carlyle's writings opened a new world of thought. *Sartor Resartus*, in particular, and the lectures on *Heroes and Hero-worship*, restated for him in a new way many things which he had learned in

other forms, and disentangled for him moral ideas, which, learnt as a part of theology, had fallen somewhat out of relation with life and its interests.

But Carlyle also brought him indirectly in contact with speculative problems, which focussed his intellectual outlook. He felt, without as yet understanding it, the pressure of a reasoned idealism. In imagination, at all events, he began to realise a system of things governed by spirit and capable of revealing hidden meaning. A more thorough curiosity about life began to grow in his mind. He felt a general freshening of intellectual interest ; and this new mood enabled him to appreciate the spiritual philosophy of Berkeley, which had taken little hold of his mind during the class work of the previous winter. Speculative studies began from this time onward to

absorb him increasingly ; and the idealistic bent of his mind, hitherto appearing chiefly in a love of romantic literature, impressed itself upon his whole work and character through philosophy. He had not yet begun to use the philosophical methods which he learned during and after the last stage of his University course ; and his philosophy was as yet no system of thought, but rather a consciousness of certain problems, a reflective tendency of mind, a growing interest in ideas, and a keen sense of the importance of speculative truth. His mood is expressed in a short note which he wrote in 1883 on the suggestion of a verse from Matthew Arnold's *Scholar Gipsy* :

A picture of life is found in those small farms, or "crofts," on the north-west coast of Scotland, each of which consists of two or three fields only, and which lie close by the seashore, while above

them the mountains rise directly. Now, in those places most of the people spend their time in the cultivation of the poor land which they have for farms; they milk patient cows and reap corn for a scanty living; and down there are their lowly resting-places—small cottages built of rough stones and roofed with turf. Others tend sheep on the hillside, high above these houses; their labour takes them ever higher and higher, and they breathe the pure air of heaven. But before them all lies the great sea.

For as the waves roll and never end, beating the shore ceaselessly, the same yet not the same, so in every moment does the mystery of life and truth present itself, whether we dwell in mere lowly fields of toil or ascend mountains of thought. But the higher we go the farther may we see over the main. Therefore, even those whose place is on the shore-farm should from time to time go with the shepherds, and look from mountain-tops upon the sea. For Contemplation is the crown of Thought.

There are some who by much toil have become learned in many things, both human and divine, but who have yet no reverence for the mysteries revealed to them by new knowledge. They are like men who, having climbed to a lofty peak, turn their backs on the sea and sky, and pore still



over stones and grass. Better those who till the ground and never leave the fields by day or the tents by night, but yet can gaze on the rippling ocean while light is given, and even in darkness listen to the solemn rhythmic beat of its waves.

The fresh and youthful sense of the issues and problems of life, which this expresses, became deeper and more definite as time went on. But when he graduated as Master of Arts in 1883, Halliday Douglas had entered, if only entered, on the spiritual task to which he was faithful throughout his career. Life had become to him a problem in need of explanation; and his chief personal interest had come to be that of arriving at the best understanding of it and setting himself in the best relation to it.

For the rest, his education—like that of most Scottish students—was largely, so far, of his own making. He had attended

prescribed courses of lectures; and some part of his reading had been done in connection with them; but more of it, particularly in the long summer vacations, had been left to chance; and history, poetry, and general literature had been read very much as they came in his way. During the last period, however, of his undergraduate course, his growing interest in speculative problems had led him to read chiefly books which seemed to bear upon them. Carlyle and Ruskin, Arnold and, most of all, Browning satisfied and educated his spiritual perceptions. Of more strictly philosophical reading he did little up to this point except to assimilate, without much criticism, the more spiritual aspect of Berkeley's philosophy and the ethics of Spinoza. This early study of Spinoza, however, was lasting in

its effect. He spoke of Spinoza afterwards as the "giver of peace"; and the conception of God as Eternal Substance, however inadequate it appeared to his subsequent thought and experience, decided certain great questions for him, and set a limit beyond which questioning seemed irrelevant. It remained certain to him that Infinite Eternal Reality held together in a single order all the elements that might seem to lie remote in experience.

In the summer of 1883, spent partly in Switzerland and partly in the Highlands of Scotland, came the first serious disturbance of the uncritical idealism of youth. It brought to Halliday Douglas, in its simplest form, the question which, at successive stages, occupied his mind throughout his student life.

Hitherto his intellectual aspirations had

encountered, as it were, no resistance. They were in part the expression of an erect character and a sensitive reflectiveness of mind. They expressed, in close and felt connection with the interests of life, the religious thought in which he had grown up, and to which he was sincerely attached, but which had not yet come to form an integral part of his personal activity. His religious beliefs had so far been little affected by his vague speculations. They formed a system of thought of which he did not doubt the truth, and of which he recognised and sought to fulfil the obligations; but, though they had undergone the gentle broadening that naturally accompanied the growth of his mind, yet he had never found them seriously challenged; and this very fact prevented him from realising how much

Christianity was worth to him. He had grown up religiously in the quiet atmosphere of St. Andrew's Free Church, under the pastorate of the Rev. R. J. Sandeman, instructed in Christian faith and practice, and, within recognised limits, discussing religious matters in a Fellowship Association connected with the church. In his home the atmosphere had been profoundly religious. In literature and philosophy he had increasingly found expression and confirmation of all those elements in Christianity which made the strongest appeal to his mind. But so far nothing had disturbed his natural acquiescence in Christian faith or compelled him to make a choice respecting it. He had an intention, still in some degree uncertain, of entering the Free Church ministry; and his mind was occupied with

---

religious questions ; but he had so far conceived religion, I think, rather as a theory than as a life.

But in the summer and autumn of 1883 he had occasion, in connection with a University essay, to make a study of modern Materialism. Materialism was a way of thinking which he had hitherto treated with a certain lofty contempt. Berkeley's analysis of matter and affirmation of its spiritual character satisfied his mind. But now, with characteristic thoroughness, he began to make a first-hand and careful acquaintance with writers whom hitherto he had only known from hearing their theories summarily refuted in the philosophy classes. He had no natural aptitude for physical science, and it had had little place in his education. Its broader results and its methods alike came

into sharp collision with the speculations which had hitherto attracted him. In reading, for the first time, the works of such writers as Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Maudsley, Tyndall, and Clifford he found himself thinking in ways very different from those to which he had been accustomed. Some of the results of science seemed to invalidate his untried idealism; and its methods of explanation seemed to apply to matters which had hitherto formed, in his mind, part of a different system of thought. He found raised for him in this way—for each generation and each man the way may be different—the perennial problem of nature and spirit.

He realised that this new way of thinking, if it were to be generally applied, must prove fatal as much to his idealism as to his belief in Christianity, since both rested,

for him, on a conception of the supernatural which seemed to be undermined by scientific explanation. But the influence of his Christian training and the natural bent of his mind towards moral interests made him realise most urgently the questions that were raised about Christianity. He felt, indeed, the grinding pressure of a materialism which he had not yet learned to transcend, although his mind could not accept it unreservedly; but he was still more keenly aware of what naturalistic explanation meant in its application to the received foundations of Christianity. His was not a mind that could rest satisfied in simple acceptance of the results of Christianity apart from all questions of their validity. He demanded truth no less than edification.



It seemed [we find him writing in the winter of 1883] as if Christianity, too, could be reduced to law. Suppose the two sources of evidence for the Christianity of the Bible—the past external supernatural events and the present supernatural religious experiences—traced to the Divine moral suitableness of the Bible. Rationalism has many ways for disposing of the first—the physical and spiritual compelling power of a great Personality, then either pious fraud or subjective delusion. Besides, one is always led to regard the moral evidence as the highest and most satisfying. And here rationalism has a very plausible account to give of Christianity—as the result merely of certain universal human tendencies which have worked and will work in race and individual according to definite natural spiritual laws. The science of religion finds in all the so-called false religions the very same conceptions which form Christianity. The fitness of Christianity to the needs of man's moral nature is quite to be looked for; that moral nature has produced Christianity for itself. And what Leslie Stephen calls "the familiar phenomena of religious conversion," sudden absolute change of life, faith, love, new obedience, with increase of grace, are simply in the order of psychological and ethical law.

Last winter I realised something of determinism and hedonism ; in summer a grinding materialism, helped out by evolution, gave force to the terrible dread of sheer law ; now even transcendentalism seems (on one side at least) to offer no escape after all. For, if we are merely single elements of the Universal Mind, which is made up of us and such as we, then all that there can be of Divine must be of our thinking. And is this accordance with our thought, in virtue of production by our thought, the only meaning of such a vindication of the rationality of our religion as—say—Hegel's? . . . I still had the blank wall before me instead of the way. This Christianity has come only from the human heart to the human heart.

The development of these questions was, from this time onward, the central element in Halliday Douglas's intellectual growth. I do not suppose that, in the form in which he stated them for himself in 1883, he ever gave them a final answer. He learned to conceive human experience of God and Divine revelation not as opposite

facts, but as essentially one ; and the mystery of Incarnation changed its meaning for him, in some degree, as he realised the spiritual character of all nature and life. But, for the time, he found confronted in his mind a dogmatic supernaturalism and a dogmatic rationalism ; and it was only by a gradual process that both of these disappeared, and made way for the faith which inspired his life and satisfied his judgment.

There can be little doubt that this acutely felt problem had much to do with his decision to delay for a year the beginning of his theological course and to continue his study of philosophy. The new problems that had been created for him had not, indeed, altered his intention of entering the ministry. They had even deepened his sense of the worth of religious truth and the necessity for learning and teaching it.

In his note-book, at this time, there occurs a quotation from Pascal.

Il n'y a que deux sortes de personnes qu'on puisse appeler raisonnables: ou ceux qui servent Dieu de tout leur cœur parce qu'ils le connaissent, ou ceux qui le cherchent de tout leur cœur parce qu'ils ne le connaissent pas.

But his perplexities had substantially changed his relation to the theology in which he had been trained; and, still more, they had deepened his speculative life and given to the technical work of philosophy a keener interest than he had hitherto felt in it. Although he had already graduated as Master of Arts, and could not, therefore, read for honours in philosophy, he attended the honours classes in metaphysics and moral philosophy, and read widely in connection with them and with the work of the Philosophical

Society, of which he was now an active member. His chief work during this winter of 1883-4 was the study of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, associated, on the one hand, with a more exact reading of Berkeley, Locke, and Hume, and, on the other hand, with a first acquaintance with the Hegelian logic. This study of the critical philosophy relaxed the tension of his immediate theological perplexities. Philosophy became itself his ruling intellectual interest; and his mental habits were gradually transformed by it.

His problem became broader. He began to survey speculative issues more disinterestedly, as it were, with less immediate consciousness of their relation to the special questions that had occupied him. The conception of thought as a natural product became subordinate to a view of nature

which made the world of material things dependent throughout on reason and rational order. All considerations of history and origin ceased to be final, and dwindled in importance as compared with those questions of rational or logical validity, which Kantian philosophy threw into sharp relief. The problems of an "historical" materialism went by the board. His point of view was altered; and his intellectual life became an attempt to interpret experience through a philosophy which criticised the "categories" by which experience is ordered and organised.

All experience, the scientific belief in the order of nature no less than the enthusiastic construction of "empirical piety," however satisfactory to a rational faith, or common sense, needs justification at the bar of thought.

To self-conscious thought, that knows every special experience in its special sense and significance, and believes in a rich, diversified, organised

unity of Truth, nothing can be more unreasonable, uncritical, and, in the Kantian sense, dogmatic, than a hasty unification, from the point of view of one special phase of knowledge, dealing with one special aspect of the object.

The material universe may be more than the aggregate of molecules: it may also be a medium for the working out of a holy end by men: it may be a harmony of beauty: it may be an organism, with a definite development: it may be a spirit, self-conditioned, self-realised—if this also be necessary to Reason.

Every phase of being is mystery, unintelligible and, to all intents, unreal, so long as it is viewed from a lower, inadequate point of view, or treated on any terms except its own; and, while *practical* life is always faith, in any sphere not rationalised as yet, to Reason there can be no utter mystery, for the highest Reality shall be interpreted only according to its highest meaning.

Any history may be legitimately proved by science; but that will still be simply a statement of facts under certain conceptions—perhaps adequate, perhaps not; and it is still the province of self-conscious thought to ask what is implied in facts being such as they are, and how facts may legitimately be conceived to be. If to trace the development

of experience be to disprove its validity, then *every* differentiation in the organism of thought may be reduced to an unintelligible identity, and we are brought to the level of primal chaos and simplicity. Whereas in truth the only meaning and recognisable fact about the supposed initial unity is just its having issued in the present complex. If the whole is derived from elements, it is only from such elements as have become this whole; and origin, history, and universe are only to be understood in the light of the principle, that whatever can be proved really and rationally to be—be it organism as more than atoms, be it righteousness as distinct from self-seeking, be it human spirit, be it Universal Spirit—whatever can be proved to be has all the authority and validity of the origin and development which are found as real, has truth, if there be any truth, and must not be made less than it is. The blank uniformity, the mere nonentity, which is the *logical outcome* of the denial of validity to the developed differentiations of experience, is unity attained only by omitting all the facts, and is a pure abstraction: the true unity must be a synthesis of all differentiations.

Such a philosophy must end in homage to the Real. The world is rational; history is divine. In history an Idea is working itself out. Facts are



substantial and trustworthy; and conversely facts are not foreign to thought. It is the rational that is real; and there is no ultimate relativity or limit of thought. The process of thought is doubtless slow, and at any point imperfect; but the ideal is unity, and there is no hindrance to its realisation, no discrepancy between Reason and Reality.

Whatever deliverance from the oppression of materialistic conclusions this new method of thinking brought to him, it entailed for Halliday Douglas no sacrifice of speculative freedom or resolve.

Of the old faith we need not speak: we have it no longer. The old Faith was good; but far better will be the Faith which has vindicated its worth, and in the process become part of life as it never was before. The final result will include all that was true in Faith; it will show alike the naturalness of Faith and the truth and certainty of Reason. To make pretence of Faith when Faith is shaken, and still to reject Reason, is to accept all possibilities of deception.

And whatever the creed of the future is to be, in its matter or substance, it must stand in a vital

union to that free thought whose foundation lies, deeper than all errors of its promoters, in a sense of responsibility to all truth.

It was the fashion, I think, of his contemporaries at the University, to speak of Halliday Douglas as a Hegelian. If the phrase meant that he was either an exclusive student or a disciple of Hegel it would be misleading. Indeed, his actual knowledge of Hegel's writings must have been slight; for at this period he did not read German freely; and his direct acquaintance with Hegel must therefore have been limited to the Logic—Stirling's *Secret of Hegel* and Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*—with whatever interpretation and fuller information the histories of philosophy might give. That Hegel's Logic influenced and formed his intellectual methods cannot be doubted. But he made little direct use

of Hegelian terminology either in speaking or in thinking. He found it impossible to maintain the "dualism" of thought and reality which Kant left unresolved for him ; and no doubt he was freed from it by the Hegelian method. Yet I think, in his actual interpretation, in the point of view from which he understood things, he was almost more influenced by the *Prolegomena to Ethics* and other writings of T. H. Green than by Hegel himself. Besides, while his mind was essentially docile, it was none the less independent ; and he did not merely absorb any system of thought. However much the ideas of others might suggest to him, they influenced him and had weight with him only in so far as his mind was quickened by them to a clearer appreciation of its own problems. It was in this way that his thought was increasingly influenced

by Hegelianism. He learned that the settled order of things is not, as he had once supposed, the enemy of spiritual life, but rather the very condition on which it depends, and that subordination to rational law is not the opposite of freedom, but its true meaning.

The years from 1884 to 1888 were spent at New College, the Theological College of the Free Church in Edinburgh. At first, I think, he found the change from the free atmosphere of the University to the more specialised work of the College paralysing and depressing. Every such institution tends to produce a certain professionalism ; and this was a state of mind to which he never became reconciled. Besides, he found himself restored to the theological perplexities from which his absorption in philosophy had, for a time, set him free.

No doubt [he writes, in the first year of his New College course] it seems hard to conclude that the pious industry of ages is on the whole a blundering attempt to think things under the wrong categories. And yet, when one finds that the vexed dogmatic questions arise strictly from inapplicable modes of thought, one cannot help wishing, for oneself at least, that the misunderstanding had never arisen and the questions had never been put.

This was an attitude of mind towards dogmatic questions to which he adhered in large measure throughout, and to which in later days he returned absolutely. He could not accustom his mind to formulæ which he found inadequate to the facts of experience; nor could he adopt the expedient of leaving the facts unformulated, and resting in the acceptance of religious experience on the one hand, and the intellectual satisfaction of idealism on the other.

He did not find that dogmatic theology was either a science or an adequate account of religious experience; yet he believed that a science of theology was essential—that an ordered view of the facts of religious experience was both necessary and attainable. The essential teachableness of his mind led him, at this stage, rather to adapt and to interpret the methods of systematic theology than to abandon them; and the perplexities—perhaps the confusions—which resulted in his own thought made his meaning often obscure to others. But at an early stage of his theological course, fresh and inspiring religious experiences led to a broader and clearer apprehension of theology itself.

It was at this time that Henry Drummond, who had suddenly become known to the world as the author of *Natural*

*Law in the Spiritual World*, began to hold his first series of Sunday evening meetings with the students of Edinburgh University; and the religious movement which resulted had far-reaching effects. Halliday Douglas was considerably influenced by it. He had, indeed, no illusions about the *Natural Law* analogies, which seemed to some minds to offer an escape from speculative difficulties. On the other hand, Drummond's almost exaggerated indifference to conventions and theories about religion threw into clear relief central and essential facts. From among all doubtful issues stood out the certainty of the personal worth of Christ, and the claim of Christ upon the minds and wills of men.

Now, Halliday Douglas's religious thought had, as yet, found no centre. It was impersonal and it was perplexed. Nothing

in it rose to the level of a dominating conviction. There was frank acceptance of great truths, and a sincere disposition to teach them ; but he now attained a more adequate sense of the dependence of all the moral force of Christianity upon personal devotion to Christ. The clearer appreciation of this solved many difficulties for him. It gave a central pivot to his theology, while it invigorated his life. It created in his mind a standard by which to estimate the importance of all theological questions as well as of practical issues.

The effect of this fresh realisation of the essential element in Christian faith was no doubt intensified by the personal influence of Drummond himself. No one could know Drummond without being the better for it. His brilliant and persuasive personality, his unselfish kindness, all the qualities



that seemed so effortless and spontaneous in him, were a constant inspiration. But they also gave to those who knew him an indescribable sense of his willing and perpetual dependence upon the power of the life of Christ. He was a proof of what he taught. Years later Halliday Douglas wrote of him :

One will never think of him but as the bright stoical spirit, in unchanging youth ; who never grew older, never was ill, until he died. Perhaps his work was done : his special mission, I daresay, was for yesterday rather than to-day. But the man himself was so unique, and so statuesque and beautiful—I mean his personality ; we shall never, never see his like—hardly, I feel to-day, his equal. Why did one see so little of him ? It makes one feel curiously old ; to think that all that chapter of one's memories in which he played a prominent part is closed !

But the deep and permanent influence of this period of his life was also in large

measure due to another cause. Drummond was essentially an evangelist; and he made immediate use of the religious life which had been roused by his meetings. Students were sent in small groups or "deputations," first to other Universities, and afterwards, during vacations, to towns and country districts. It was in connection with these missions that Halliday Douglas began to communicate to others the faith by which his own life was inspired—in simple and direct addresses whose sole and constant theme was the restoration of life and character through the power of the life of Christ. Hitherto he had done little outside his own work as a student, and had taken no very active or prominent part in philanthropic or religious work. Now he began to find in Christianity an impulse not merely to seek truth and goodness for

himself, but to impart them. He was indeed always "apt to teach"—eager to share whatever truth he knew; but now he had realised a truth and discovered a force more available for human good than any that he had known before; and he was filled with a new zeal in the service of other men. Now, nothing so confirms any faith as the attempt to impart it; and no truth takes so strong hold of a man's own mind and character as that by which he is first led to come to the help of his neighbours. His fuller experience of the worth and claim of Christ, deepened by the attempt to win the assent of others to it, came to be the central fact of life for Halliday Douglas; and it gave a fresh impulse to his theological work. In after-years it was very notable how in all questions of doctrine his mind seemed

almost irresistibly to gravitate towards the way of thinking most consonant with the tenor of Christian faith, how he seemed to be unconsciously governed by a sense of what did most justice to the fact of Christ's character. It was not that he yielded to the conventions that pass for orthodoxy: they influenced him to a steadily decreasing extent. It was not that he ignored inconvenient facts: he was singularly open-minded. But the whole texture of his thoughts was influenced by personal appreciation of the mind of Christ.

From this time onward his theological work ran in deeper and more definite grooves. The great fact of Christian experience ruled his thinking; and two subjects in particular, two great conceptions, occupied him—the nature of the Divine self-revelation, and the mystery of

Incarnation. Elsewhere in this volume—and in his own words—a fuller account is given of his way of regarding these twin pivots of his theological thought. His conception of them was rooted wholly and expressly in religious experience. No external argument seemed to him to be adequate to their significance, no demonstration by miracle to be necessary or relevant to them.

If miracle be disproved, the Church has still the mercy of God, and the revelation of grace, and the sacrifice of Christ, and the life in His Spirit.

Or again :

Some historical element is essential to the Christian consciousness—if no more than this, that there has been a history. Further than this one cannot go. To say that Faith rests on particular historical facts, by argument from them, is to make Faith a remote inference, a feebler sense. It is well that Faith does not depend upon the possibility of

demonstrating the historical reality of particular alleged events; for historical demonstrations can seldom be conclusive. It is well that the Christian consciousness does not involve in its faith in Christ the critical conviction of the accuracy of any accredited accounts of Him; for historical investigation can hardly in any case prove more than the general trustworthiness of a record, so that belief founded on details can never be vital; while, as to *inspiration*, it seems to me that the relation of inspiration to historical accuracy is as undetermined, say, as the relation of it to scientific accuracy once was. . . .

. . . On the other hand, must not Christian faith, as faith in Christ, in God Incarnate, involve the objective historical fact of Incarnation? It is the very nature of Incarnation to be historical. The Christian consciousness refers to history, because the actual presence of God in history is the essence of Christianity. The view of Christianity which makes no reference to history, to the concrete work of Christ as something all important, is just the antithesis of Christianity. If the idea of reconciliation, which Christianity has brought to the world, be the whole of Christianity, if Christ's work was only to disclose and perhaps symbolise that idea, if He had nothing actually to do with the realisation of it for the world, then the idea is thenceforward

sufficient. If God and man are reconciled potentially (according to Christ's belief and teaching, but not at all through his Incarnation and Death), a mediator is not really admissible to Religion. The Person Christ now stands aside. But that is not the Christian consciousness. . . .

The life of Christ is handed on from man to man, has been so since Christ Himself began to live it. And if we refer it back to Him, this is not because of facts of testimony or credible witnesses. It is because of Christian life in the testimony, and the answering satisfaction of our faith. It is because of that which argument could never secure and criticism can never destroy.

There are three stages in Revelation: first prophecy, a great hope and growing expectancy; then fulfilment, the presence of God in history; and now life in the light of that, the world's future lying there in germ, as we believe. We are called to unfold the purposes of Christ's spirit, and to make His aims our own. In Him do we meet the very will of God in the world, there to find peace. Through Him our hope is anchored within the veil. Infinite mystery consecrates our little lives. A Divine object to live for recalls us from our apathy and forbids us any longer to disbelieve in life. Christ is striving in the world's strife, alone if we stand not

with him. And even when we fail Him and grow too weary, and so see ourselves too unworthy even to follow Him, we may still contemplate the all-subduing love and uniform, unquenched hope of His Spirit, and lose ourselves in Him. Come to us what will, Christ prevaieth. So we believe again.

All this expresses a persistent and unwavering attempt to interpret the facts of religious experience themselves, and to survey them, not in the interests of any special kind of theory, but as themselves essential and sufficient.

I was stirred to feel that nothing but holiness is worth living for. And when this star was suddenly covered, I felt that that was the suicidal point. Finally, I found that I could even here lose myself in the love of Christ, take shelter with Him both from the world and from my own despair, and be able, having Him, to dispense with any interest or satisfaction of my own. Even when I think Him inadequate, then do I most find perfect peace in Him. Let Him live, and, since I cannot trust myself to live for Him and His ends, let me live only in Him.



Theology under such impulses seeks, as he used himself to say, “rather to be deep than broad”—rather to lay hold upon that in Christian faith which must govern life, than to make it appear simply a separate part of a life otherwise complete in itself. Every such intensification of religious thought has two effects. It tends to simplicity; and throughout his life Halliday Douglas’s faith became always more simple, more indifferent to purposeless theories, more free from small doctrinal disputes, more able “to realise that the God one worships is the God of one’s childhood.” But concentration of religious thought leads also to practical activity. Finding the curious subtleties of doctrine to be things indifferent, penetrated by religious experience and thinking of it with a clear simplicity, he found that “work must give the zest

to life." He lived a student's life strenuously; and indeed it was the only life in which he was ever completely at home; but he felt increasingly the impulse to seek his future work. The Theological Society, not less than the class-rooms, had been the scene of much of his college activity; but when, in the last year of his course, he had to choose between the presidentships of the Missionary and Theological Societies of the college, he accepted the first; and the incident is significant because it meant that, realising the direction in which, at first, at all events, his work must lie, he went out to meet it, and was willing rather to forgo some part of his opportunity as a student than to imperil his usefulness in the career to which he was called. Early in his ministerial life he wrote, "I should like of all things to be a professor; but I



1887

*From a photograph by Mr. W. Crooke, Edinburgh*



never shall." In his last years at college he had begun to think increasingly of the duties and opportunities of pastoral work, spending his last summer vacation in London instead of at a German university, and when, at the end of his course, he gained the Cunningham Fellowship in the New College, resigning it in order to enter at once upon the work of the ministry.

One incident in the last months of his college life had then and afterwards so much meaning for him that I cannot but narrate it. He was asked to go to Aden to take, in the mission there, the place made vacant by the death of the brilliant and devoted Keith Falconer. I cannot tell how this affected him better than by his own record of it.

*December 30th [1887].* Asked by — to go to Aden.

“31<sup>st</sup>. To refuse this call wilfully and without a stronger call to remain at home or work elsewhere would be useless and suicidal ; for I should have no power for a ministry left, and no hope of either happiness or success.

But here the two elements in which I had always expected to find guidance—the needs of men for Christ on the one hand, and my own provision given by God on the other—seem to give opposite signs. Have I not been guided and meant to become just what I am, and to possess just the special gifts I have?—things not called for in this special sphere. Or is this self-pleasing and self-reliance, when God is calling to a difficult duty and offers to provide me for it?

Let me be assured that, as all men need to live to Jesus, work may be done for Him anywhere ; and that work chosen and done in obedience is blessed.

What I should have to do at home would simply be telling people to do this kind of work, and make all sacrifices for Christ. Would it not be more satisfactory to go and do it myself? In any event, I shall evidently need an absolutely clear conscience about it, if I am to preach it. Can I have that if I stay at home? I could never preach Christ once if I had not a complete conviction of being precisely

in my own proper place in His service, a place to which I had a right that I could defend against my own scruples and the questionings of others. Therefore I must take care.

1888. *January 1st, Sunday.* Marcus Dods' chapter on "Thy will be done" and Faber's hymn "The will of God" greatly helped me yesterday and to-day.

*January 3rd.* If I may quite well be called upon to leave not only home, but settled habits and regions of thought, not only pleasures and comforts but also all art, learning, and culture, this proves that the all-important object is to bring men to Christ.

Also, if my work may take this form of preaching the mere Gospel to these Arabs, it must always and anywhere be a message, a proclamation of a saving and indispensable fact.

*January 4th.* Forbidden by Professor ——\* to go to Aden. It is to be hoped he is right, then.

*January 5th.* I feel what a blessing it has been to get this view of the whole extent of Christ's claim upon my life, and to have been made willing to obey.

Nothing is really good but the will of God: in that, resignation is deep peace.

And now I feel more than ever before that all

\* He was forbidden on medical grounds to accept the invitation.—C. D.

earthly joys, being undeserved and unnecessary, are purely my Father's gifts of grace. He might have called me to serve Him without them, and even then have been giving me above my deserving. Now He is giving me some of them back again.

It feels strange, all the same, to be plucked out of a difficulty of conscience in this accidental kind of way. I suppose it's the plan we're made on.

I do trust the truth that nothing is good but the will of God may become a fixed idea and ruling principle with me, by the grace of God.

It would be difficult to illustrate better than by this incident the quiet and deliberate self-devotion that consecrated his life. He never spoke of it. To be disinterested and given up to his calling was natural to him. He took it as a matter of course. Yet it is not without reward that real sacrifices are made; and the days in which he resolved to give up more than was, after all, required of him were a fitting preparation for a life of unselfish work, and a strong assurance to



himself of the spiritual forces that sustained him. For his devotion was no grudging or unwilling effort. It was a happy and spontaneous loyalty.

Intellectually, authority may be meaningless ; but it is all in all when the question is of faith, or spiritual courage. Then the soldier looks for all to the captains and to the general.

*Obedience*

His was a loyalty too sincere and too complete to make any inroad upon his intellectual freedom.

Christ is on the side of truth, and in loving and seeking fact one has Christ's favour and help. Orthodox representations add to error and falsehood in one's heart the strange confusion that Christ and a truth that must be honoured seem to be opposed. It is not possible ; and to know and remember that is much.

But there was a difficulty of a very practical kind which it was inevitable that he should meet when he came to put

himself in relation with the doctrinal standards of the Church. The question how they should act in respect of subscribing the appointed formula was one which was very anxiously considered by the best students of that time; and it could not but present most serious difficulty to a man so strict with himself as Halliday Douglas, living as he did in an intellectual atmosphere very different from that of dogmatic literalness. It is desirable to give the reasons which decided him, in spite of difficulties which he recognised; and his own words, which I know represented a very deliberate judgment, are the best explanation.

We believe in the Divine institution (historical naturalness) of the visible Church. It is continuous, and does not occasionally disappear below other movements and institutions of Society. So, too, evangelical dogma—a property of the visible Church,

which alone gives it expression, and on whose worship and activity its truth is noticeably dependent—has always been set forth in some real though imperfect form.

What attitude, then, should the individual assume to such dogmatic expressions of the true faith? In some ages this question is very simple; those who really believe in Christ and really intend to do justice to their belief are entirely agreed—or almost all agreed—as to the dogmatic utterance. . . . The question of the individual's relation to the Confession can arise as a difficulty only in a time of transition. In such a time it is inevitable that it should so arise. In such a time—which neither you nor I create for ourselves—the old dogmatic system is perfectly satisfactory to no one, or to no truly educated person; to all it is more or less full of improbable dogmatisings and (especially) of internal contradictions to its own central Christian principle—to which we wish to do justice. A new and generally acceptable dogmatic system, however, is, as a matter of fact, unattainable. That is not one of the possible alternatives. Yet I cannot desert evangelical dogma, nor take up a merely negative attitude to what I value for the sake of that in it which I regard more highly than any other reality; while neither the Church's system, nor my

neighbour's, nor my own, for that matter, seems to me to do full justice to the truth of God as it centres in Christ. Every position that I could take up would be in itself a compromise; further, it would be misleading, probably, to others. I conform; my love of the truth in Christ is misjudged as superstition or dishonesty, and my individual convictions on details are unexpressed. I refuse; and my refusal is taken, by both the Church and the world, for the denial of what my deepest faith affirms.

.   .   .   .   .

You may say that, on such wide principles, one might conform to any Confession. I would do so, to any true Church confession, if I were in sympathy with the Church. I could possibly be a Lutheran. Probably "types of faith" are matters of nationality, education, and so on, and are inevitable; and they determine each its national system.

.   .   .   .   .

But, granted that the compromise of subscription is so inevitable, why not escape the awkward fix by holding off altogether? Is the Church not entitled to expect that those who do not hold all that she chooses to impose in the way of doctrine should observe her private right by remaining outside? I think not. The Church is not a private institu-

tion able to erect barriers at its own will, and prescribe its own terms either of communion or of service. . . .

If the Church had not Christ's truth in charge, we would not care to accept its poor formulas; and if its formulas were advanced in its own name and right, we might be obliged by our disagreement with them to let the Church keep us out. But if what we are asked in the formula is "whether we also confess Christ," and if we still believe that the Church's formulas really (if imperfectly) aim at confessing Him also, then we not only may but must answer, Yes.

. . . The fact that Christ gave the Church the revealed truth, which we also in our way believe, gives us a right as Christians to confess His truth in and with the Church, if we will; and while if the Church, by the light given her, honestly judged our views contrary to true faith in Christ, she would be justified in refusing us, we are justified in subscribing to a Church Confession of Faith so long as we honestly judge our views most consistent with that same faith in Christ which the Church holds and means to express; and unless we judge our views inconsistent with that Catholic Christian faith in its essential meaning, we must not expressly refuse to subscribe with our brethren.

It is not necessary to discuss these views. It is only worth while to say that the action which Halliday Douglas was led by them to take was never questioned by his own mind afterwards ; and that the same sincerity of purpose and devotion to the great objects of the Church, which led him now, in spite of unconcealed differences of opinion, to enter her work, kept him afterwards in complete and cordial sympathy with those whose doctrinal position was remote from his own.

With the close of his work at college and his entry upon the ministerial calling, Halliday Douglas's life in Edinburgh came to an end. But although he came there after this time only as a visitor, he always felt Edinburgh to be in a peculiar degree his home ; and he was bound to it by some of

the closest ties of memory and affection. It is fitting that his last rest is there.

I have said nothing of the outward circumstances of his Edinburgh life—its pleasures, its distinctions—the “things that perish with the using.” I have not even spoken of his many friendships. Yet it would not be easy to overstate the part that they played with him. All his work—his thinking, his reading, his practical effort—was carried on in an atmosphere of friendship. Within the New College he was one of a group of men bound together by strong affection no less than by the highest common interests. It was of them that he wrote :

The friends that have helped me most did not do so by speaking or writing on spiritual subjects, but by sympathetically working at things with me, and by our actually sharing our light together.

But his friendships were never limited, either now or later, to those whose special interests were the same as his own. He lived always in a large world; and his friends were various and often strange to one another. He was made for friendship—ungrudging, sympathetic, giving and desiring affection, and finding it everywhere. The sacred experiences of religious life took their colour from a character governed by a spirit of unsuspicious goodwill; and all his mind was mellowed by the kindness with which he was surrounded. At the end of his college days life had still many lessons to teach him; but he had learned to think faithfully and clearly; the generous impulses of his youth had matured into a high and steadfast faith; and he had practised in many friendships that large and sympathetic comprehension which no one



who knew him failed to discern in him. Above all other qualifications for his future calling stood his keen sense (for it was more than faith) of the worth and power of the person and spirit of Christ. As years passed, his faith became simpler, more forgetful of formulæ, less conscious of limits and divisions, while his mind took an always broader survey of life and its issues. Yet in 1888 he went out to his work no less ready than eager for it.

In the summer of that year he left home to enter on his first ministerial work; and two years were spent first as assistant in Birkenhead, and afterwards in Glasgow and Edinburgh. In 1890 he was ordained to the Free Church congregation in Huntly; and he remained there till 1893, when he began his eight years' ministry in Cambridge.

His first work was undertaken as assistant to the late Dr. MacLeod in Trinity Presbyterian Church at Birkenhead. He spent there a happy year among friends whose kindness made his new work easy, and of whom he always kept an affectionate memory. He learned also a sympathy with the work of English Presbyterianism which enabled him, a few years later, to take part in it. During the last few months of 1889 he occupied, in the absence of Dr. Marcus Dods, the pulpit of Renfield Church, in Glasgow ; and early in the following year he returned to Edinburgh to assist Dr. Whyte, in St. George's Free Church, for a few months.

These were months of considerable trial and difficulty. During his temporary work at Renfield Church a considerable part of the congregation there had been so much attracted

to him that when Dr. Dods was appointed to a chair in New College, they desired to call Halliday Douglas as his successor. His youth and short experience were a natural ground of objection to this course on the part of others, to whom he was less well known; and, though the call was ultimately decided upon, it was in the end (partly through misunderstanding) inadequately signed; and it could not be proceeded with by the Presbytery. The disappointment was an acute one. He was anxious to have settled work. He had found Glasgow congenial; he had many friends there; and the prospect of returning to his work and to them had been at one time very definite. It would have been unnatural if its withdrawal had not affected him. Yet the disappointment left him, as all such things did, both then and afterwards, very

free from any sort of discontent or resentment.

In the summer of 1890, called simultaneously to Dumfries and to Huntly, he went to Huntly, and entered upon his three years' work there as colleague to the Rev. Mr. Burnet.

If we go to the country [he wrote], it will do me good in many ways to be brought into direct contact with life, in simple and natural forms, and to take a spiritual interest in people apart from all adventitious sympathies.

In 1888 he had become engaged to be married to Miss Isabel Love, daughter of Mr. William McNaughton Love, of London and Melbourne; and in the autumn of 1890 they were married.

Of the years which he spent at Huntly there is little to record. In the happy sympathies of his home and in increasing

contact with the needs and difficulties of his congregation, he grew always more genial and more gentle, throwing off whatever reserve had in any measure concealed the warmth of his goodwill. It was the readiness of his affection which made him so genuinely a pastor both in Huntly and in Cambridge. He was the friend of all his people. They always knew, and they remember still, how he gave himself to them, with a heart that was always at leisure, and a comprehension that never failed. His relation to them was no official bond, but that of friend with friend, of mutual support and help. For his was not the ungracious and patronising friendship that must always give without receiving. Simple and unlearned men and young undergraduates knew, and knew rightly, the happiness that their friendship gave him.

The strain of his new work and its responsibilities bore heavily on him. He had hoped, and others had hoped for him, that he would find in Huntly more leisure for study than could be expected in a larger town; but his work there proved hard and unrelenting; and he was very exacting with himself. He felt very keenly, too, the difficulty of constant and public religious expression. The very qualities that prevented it from becoming mechanical with him made his work arduous.

Yet in spite of all this, and in spite too of its influence on a constitution never robust and easily overstrained, his work in Huntly was happy in itself and in its circumstances. He enjoyed keenly the pleasant country and its restful life. More and more he won the slow and undemonstrative but loyal affection of his people;





1892

*From a photograph by John Warrack, Esq.*



and he appreciated all the worth of their stern and simple character. He took an active and interested part in their public affairs. But above all he was stimulated by the intensity of their zeal for the life and work of the Church. The services of the Church, and all its associations, held in their lives a place not always reserved for such interests. There were among them those whose memories went back to the struggles and aspirations of the first days of the Free Church, in whose early history their parish had played a conspicuous part. A great tradition, kept alive by the ministry of Principal Rainy and Dr. Whyte, made their Church the centre of their lives.

Those who saw it cannot easily forget the spectacle of the Huntly congregation, gathered from a wide district, thronging the church, and the almost breathless

intentness with which they listened to their young pastor. Their eagerness gave zest to his work, and carried him through many difficulties.

But in 1893 he was called to Cambridge as the first pastor of the Presbyterian Church there; and after much consideration he accepted the call. It was not without reluctance that he left Scotland and the Free Church. But the work in Cambridge, and particularly the care of Scottish undergraduates there, had peculiar attraction and interest for him. With all his love of country life, he was essentially a townsman, and still more a university man; and he greatly missed the intellectual and spiritual stimulus which Cambridge was so well fitted to afford him. His special gifts and training seemed likely to find more complete and natural use there

than in a country parish. Besides, he was at heart always a student, and he desired more of a student's life. Everything combined to take him to Cambridge; and he lived and worked there for eight years.

The circumstances of his work in Cambridge were very pleasant; and when they were over, he spoke of his early years there as the happiest of his life. The degree in which he was brought in contact with the University was a peculiar delight to him; for it was natural to him to feel more at home in university life than elsewhere. When he went to Cambridge, he was admitted a Fellow-commoner of St. John's College; and both there and as a guest in other colleges he soon made many friends among "dons" and undergraduates alike. There was,

indeed, little to retard that rapid growth of friendship which his simple, genial spirit always made easy. He entered on his work in no illiberal mood. He was profoundly loyal to his own Church, proud of its traditions, and sure of its mission. But no one could suspect him of a proselytising temper; and I think it never occurred to him that his work or his position could be treated with suspicion or disrespect, or that he need be on the defensive with regard to them. He fell readily into a place distinctively his own, among both the members of the University and the townspeople of Cambridge. His position, indeed, as the first pastor of St. Columba's was not in all respects simple. The rival claims of the town members of his congregation and of the undergraduates who were his peculiar charge might easily

have led to difficulty ; but this was averted by his own tact, and by the chivalrous kindness with which his congregation recognised the special circumstances of his work ; and he was able to devote himself, with rapidly growing success, to the interests of undergraduates both within his congregation and outside it. This was a task for which he was peculiarly qualified. It required no effort on his part to enter into all the interests that formed a common ground. His unaffected pleasure in sports and recreations was a natural bond with many whose interests were otherwise different from his own ; and it helped often to relieve the strain of his work and to maintain the freshness of his mind. He gave an impression always of mirthful ease and good-humour. He was able to live for the moment ; so that the depression

from which he sometimes suffered was rarely apparent, and did not deeply affect his happiness. He kept, to the end of his life, a genial and unruffled gaiety. He was no ascetic. No one knew better than he both how to take the pleasures of life and how to let them go.

I believe the pleasure that he took in life was a part of his charm for younger men. But he inspired in them not only affection but confidence. They knew how honestly he realised and accepted the darker facts of life, with how cool a head he could consider their troubles, and with what un-intrusive sympathy he would meet confidences which he never forced. Nothing was more conspicuous in him than his unselfish simplicity ; and it was so infectious that those who were with him became natural and were at ease ; they were often

able to forget poses and pretences, and to think their own thoughts and be themselves. All through these years, too, his outlook and his appreciation of moral and spiritual facts grew always broader and simpler. While he had never forgotten, himself, the peculiar obligations which were laid on him by his ministerial calling, he had never been apt to obtrude it on the notice of others; but I think I shall not be misunderstood if I say that in the work and atmosphere of his Cambridge life he became always more of a layman—not governed by conventions, but carrying a certain elevated shrewdness and idealised common-sense into the sacred regions of life where his work lay.

A single illustration of his 'pastoral' work may easily convey more than any description; and I am allowed to quote from a

letter which he wrote to a friend who had asked for advice and help :

With regard to "feelings" and "experiences," I am sure you are right upon the whole ; these are never to be made an object or end in themselves, still less to be wrought up artificially. The first thing is to do what you ought to do, and be what you ought to be in your actual relationships. I think if one earnestly desires to be unselfish and obedient, one is strangely led on and led out just by the calls and duties that come.

Of course the actual experience of thus serving Christ will not fail to stir up strong feelings in one's heart—all the more thrilling because, compared with the high pressure of a short-lived excitement, they are rare, and much more powerful and more lasting because perfectly natural. The joy and enthusiasm will, if we are faithful, grow more habitual.

We ought, besides, to watch our hearts, and (judiciously) to stir up our minds to remembrance, and always to be ashamed of feeling so little—so little respect for truth, so little admiration for goodness, so little love to Christ.

But I have great faith in the way the Spirit of God builds up a solid "life of feeling," and one with



practical power, through daily loyalty. If one is ready, biddable, and liberated from egotism—ready to meet the needs of Christ's service when they actually occur to him, and to help other people to happiness and goodness whenever their lives touch his—he will steadily know more, do more, and feel more. Opportunities will multiply, calls will constantly be heard, and without dangerous straining or the most awful risk of self-consciousness and self-delusion, a soul will grow in strength and sweetness.

The favoured field for this sort of growth is undoubtedly daily common life. With simple, *kind* unselfishness (the other sort is useless) there, and readiness to go off the beaten track when there is plainly something needed that we can do, Christ has pliable material to work upon, and everything will follow.

So you have your opening already for a quiet and yet passionate unselfishness—a strictly real and practical and yet enthusiastic self-surrender to the spirit of Christ.

It would not be altogether easy to estimate his success or power as a preacher. He was always himself dissatisfied with his work; and certainly his preaching lacked

---

some of the qualities that make for popular success. It was more argumentative and suggestive than hortatory ; and the emotions that inspired it and made themselves felt in it were deep rather than exuberant. It was characterised by a certain reticence and veracity far removed from sensational effect ; and an almost morbid dislike of exaggeration often restrained his expression. Yet the very qualities that prevented his preaching from being strictly popular made their own peculiar appeal to many minds. It had an air, not always found in any form of public speech, of being a statement of the truth made simply because of its being the truth. His careful moderation gave weight to all his words ; and his simplicity carried conviction with it. His preaching was perhaps best adapted to those who were least disposed to be preached

to. But they were no unimportant part of his audience.

He gave himself wholly to his work in Cambridge, and sought no conspicuous place in the public life of his Church. He was keenly interested in politics, a convinced and strenuous Liberal, and one of those who find it "a one-sided patriotism that calls us to avert our eyes from all our great social questions, and ignore the sorrows of the poor, in the name of 'love of country'"; but he had little disposition to raise political issues affecting religious life, and he was reluctant to involve the Churches in political conflict, in which he saw a peril to their spiritual influence.

But in Cambridge itself he played an active part in philanthropic and educational work; and in particular he took a deep

and watchful interest in the affairs of Westminster College (the theological college of the English Presbyterian Church), which was transferred to Cambridge during his stay there. It is the opinion of those best qualified to judge that his presence did much to win for the new college the friendly reception which it enjoyed; and he devoted himself incessantly to its interests. At the time of its removal to Cambridge he published a short account of its previous history.

Dr. John Watson, of Liverpool, who was at that time convener of the College Committee, writes:

It was the good fortune of our Church that Halliday Douglas was her first minister in Cambridge, for no one, by his character and by his gifts, by his instinctive love of whatsoever things are pure and lovely, could have represented a new and unknown community with more intimate under-

standing or more persuasive grace. As an ambassador of our Church, moving among the scholars of Cambridge, he confirmed any favourable judgment which in their charity they may have formed, and dispelled any prejudice which through want of knowledge may have existed. In his love of learning, his passion for philosophy, his capacity for severe thought, his simplicity of life, his pride in a storied past, and his hereditary devotion to the ecclesiastical commonwealth of which he was by baptism and ordination doubly a member, proved him a true son of the Scots Church. It was a cause of deep regret to many of us that we lost him from Cambridge, a sudden and poignant sorrow that he was lost so young to the Church on earth. He was called early from this lower service, but he lived long enough to lay the foundations of our Church doctrine and Church life in Cambridge, and unto all who knew him he remains a reinforcement of high purpose and holy living, in the hour when the snare of cheap, unworthy success and the temptation of worldly softness beset and are ready to vanquish the soul of Christ's disciple and minister.

During the years which he spent at Cambridge he found more frequent oppor-

tunities of foreign travel than he had previously had ; and he used them with growing eagerness. Italy, in particular, was always an “enchanted land” to him—“a place in which you cannot walk the streets without getting educated.” He was peculiarly sensitive to both natural and artistic beauty ; and music and painting especially gave him a keen and unfailing pleasure, which was one of his chief inducements to travel.

Every year, too, he returned to Scotland : he was most at home among Scottish people and in the Scottish country. He took an especial pleasure in yachting among the lonely islands and quiet lochs of the west coast, and in wanderings in the western Highlands—his mother’s native country. He loved—

The strange pathos of Loch Ewe, with dark mists hanging on the steep rocks round, and over the still

sea; the glorious brightness of Loch Linnhe, and the lights and shades on the hills, range upon range, all round from Oban to Glencoe, and Ben Nevis beyond all; soft wooded hills and sandy beaches, with rocky hills towering above, at Gairloch and Loch Maree; the bleakness of the moor at Sligachan.

It was perhaps natural that a mind so sympathetic and genial as his should feel itself at least as much at home in the past as in the shifting present.

I suppose [he wrote in 1901] the twentieth century is to be very wonderful, and all that. I'm quite sure it won't be half as jolly as the century in which you and I were young—what say you? Seriously, the nineteenth was a first-class century, in my humble opinion; and, to show that this is not prejudice, I add that the time in which, of all times, I should have chosen to live would have been the *first* half of the nineteenth century. Waterloo when one was fifteen; Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley going strong; Waverley Novels appearing (instead of Rudyard Kipling); Tennyson presently appearing on the horizon; politics a real business; coaches still running, with railways

for a pleasing novelty ; and sentiment not yet gone out of fashion,—a green and pleasant time !

No doubt his intellectual sympathy with the past contributed to his rare faculty for understanding and responding to the most various stages of development in religious opinion. He was very far from the narrow intellectualism that can understand no language of religion except its own, and allows identity of sympathies and passions to be obscured by differences of circumstance and phrase. To his catholic mind, the faith that renews and inspires life was apparent in widely various intellectual settings.

The sæcular tradition of the Church is not a tradition of doctrine merely. It is the tradition of the spirit—a habit and a life—that has been handed down. It is a way of living and of taking life. A faith rather than a doctrine is the great entail and permanent inheritance of the Church—a spiritual



attitude, spiritual sympathies and convictions—a behaviour, a spirit, and a life—a life in God.

We can hardly do better than imitate the spirit and follow the main drift of our fathers' lives—the lives of those who have gone before us in the Church of Christ. We can hardly do better than imitate their faith—its holiness and aspiration, its strength and peace—and share the victory with which it overcame the world for them; and by the same grace which was theirs bring our lives to the like happy and blessed issue.

Indeed, however far he might depart—and he travelled far—from the intellectual positions of his youth, so loyal and free a mind as his could never lose its sense of continuity with the spiritual tradition of the past; and he sought rather to continue than to supplant or displace the work of the generation that went before.

It is a solemn business for us to feel ourselves pushed forward into the van, as our front-rank men are called away. I dread the day of my father's

going, not only for my own loss, but because it will be so like the beginning of the last stage, the opening of the last chapter. It seems to give you a kind of shelter from the awful work of the world when you have a generation still ahead of you, to bear the brunt and give you the benefit of their experience. I shall hate to be a front-ranker.

He was never to be a front-ranker. Yet no unimportant part of his fitness to face the needs of his own time was his comprehension of the efforts and his appropriation of the gains of those who went before him.

It was characteristic of his work at Cambridge that much of it was done in his own home. His house was a constant haunt of undergraduates; and its quiet hospitality does not need to be recalled to the memory of his friends. They will not forget his pleasure in all that belonged to it, the happiness that was its atmosphere.





1896

*From a photograph by Mr. Tunny, Edinburgh*

They will not easily think of him apart from his wife, who shared with him every act and every interest, or from their daughter Margaret, who was born soon after they went to Cambridge, and who was always his most inseparable play-fellow. His life at home was a fit symbol of all the affection and goodwill with which he went about day by day in the outside world.

His coming to Cambridge had been the occasion of a more active renewal of his work as a student than had been possible at Huntly. He seized the opportunity of historical and philosophical study which the University afforded, and of which his new work left him free to make use. He was by nature and habit always a student. Books were a large part of his world; and study and speculation were always the

occupations of his choice. During his life at Cambridge he was increasingly engrossed in the subjects which had occupied him ever since his college days. He contrived, during his first five years there, to make a special study of the *Psychology of Pietro Pomponazzi*, and submitted a dissertation on this subject for the research B.A. degree in 1898. The dissertation was accepted; and he proceeded to the M.A. degree in 1901. This dissertation, which is chiefly a study of the influence of Aristotelian psychology, was never published by him, because he intended to incorporate it in a larger and more general work. His death prevented this; and it is proposed now to publish the study of Pomponazzi by itself.

While he was at Cambridge, and partly, no doubt, under the influence of its associations,

the desire to write and to teach, which had always been in his mind, became steadily greater. But he found it impossible to combine the kind of literary work which he wished to do with his pastoral duties.

Alas! [he wrote] the production of a book (a real book; *Westminster College* was not a book) is not for me such an easy matter. It is not a question of time: it is a question of an undivided mind. I have never been able to do anything at all when I had anything else in hand—least of all any mental work. Now, with the charge of a congregation, even one's time is never uninterrupted; but, above all, one's mind is never free. . . . It is really a question of temperament. A slow worker, I cannot produce more than the weekly necessities require—nor even as much. Then, with so many people for whom one is responsible, I cannot brood; and without brooding I can never write the book I wish to write or care to see published.

The desire to be free to write was a strong inducement to exchange his pastoral work for a teaching post; but I believe that

the principal incentive to this was a half-conscious desire to express his meaning more fully, more deliberately, more precisely than was possible in pulpit work. His duty as a preacher compelled him often, as it were, to lay aside his argument just when it had become most interesting to him, or to sacrifice precision and thoroughness and the full disclosure of his mind to the broader effects which are necessary in popular treatment of a subject. But, from whatever cause, it is certainly the case that in 1901 he had reached the conclusion, towards which his mind had been moving for years back, that he could do his best work as a teacher rather than as a preacher ; and he resolved to seek a new career in theological teaching.

While this resolution was forming in his mind, various circumstances favoured it. There was a more or less vague



project of instituting a lectureship in apologetics in Westminster College, and retaining his services there. But nothing came of this. Some of his friends, also, urged his appointment to the Chair of Church History vacated in New College, Edinburgh, by Principal Rainy; and he would eagerly have welcomed an opportunity of returning to work in Edinburgh; but he had never any serious expectation of being appointed to this chair.

Early in 1901, however, he was recommended for appointment to the Chair of Apologetics and Pastoral Theology in Knox College, Toronto, one of the theological colleges of the Presbyterian Church of Canada; and after some deliberation, but without much hesitancy, he resolved to accept nomination for it. He was reluctant, indeed, to leave home, and specially

to sever the many ties which bound him to Cambridge; and nothing but a sense of his duty to seek his proper work would have induced him to go; but now, as always, he considered only how he might best employ himself in the high service to which his life was given; and he saw in the invitation to go to Toronto an opportunity—perhaps the only opportunity—of finding that special work for which he knew himself to be most fitted.

The winter which he spent in Toronto was perhaps the happiest time of his life. The illness which ended fatally, not many months later, had indeed already begun to affect him; and his impaired health increased the strain of his new duties. But he bore this with a light heart; and his work in all its circumstances was an inexhaustible joy to him. The kindness of

his colleagues, and the welcome which he received on all hands, made him at home in his new surroundings. His success with his students inspired him from day to day in his congenial task. He had at last, it seemed, come to his own sphere, in which his mind had greater freedom and his energies a more proper scope than he had hitherto found. Whatever sacrifice he had made in leaving home was rewarded. He found, all about him, new interests, new opportunities, new friendships. But especially the college and his work in it absorbed and satisfied him. Of these his friend and colleague Professor McFadyen gives the following account:

The coming of Professor Douglas to Canada in September, 1901, to enter upon his duties as Professor of Apologetics, Homiletics, and Pastoral

Theology in Knox College, Toronto, had aroused the highest expectations. The chair was one of the most important which it is in the power of the Canadian Church to offer; and the Board and Senate of the College had searched long and earnestly on both sides of the Atlantic for one into whose hands they could confidently commit these important departments. The difficulty—always a serious one—of securing a Professor of Apologetics was intensified by the peculiar theological position of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. The rapid growth of the west, with its almost illimitable territory, and its very heterogeneous population, has created for the Church numerous practical difficulties of a kind that are perhaps not to be matched by any other Church in the world. The urgent pressure of the practical problems has left little time for speculative and scholarly pursuits, and the general temper of the Church has been not unnaturally conservative, though not by any means obstinately so. At the same time many, especially though not exclusively among the younger men, some of whom have studied in Britain, have felt the growing importance and even necessity of keeping the Church in touch with the movements of modern theological scholarship. Thus the general conservative leanings of the Church are tempered

by a distinctly progressive and growingly influential element; and the occupant of the chair had to be, if possible, a man who could satisfy the hopes of both parties. He must be neither an obscurantist nor a radical; he had, on the one hand, to be able to reassure the conservative spirits, and on the other, he had to justify the hopes of those who believe that theology has a future as well as a past.


It will readily be seen that this was no easy position to occupy; but it is the bare truth to say that Professor Douglas occupied it not only to the absolute satisfaction but to the admiration of both parties. Every one felt that the highest interests of the Church were safe in his hands. He was too wise a man to offend prejudice unnecessarily; but he was too loyal to truth to conciliate prejudice by compromise. And so both those who loved the past and those who believed in the present and the future found in him a man after their own hearts: there can be no doubt at all that, had he lived, he would have been a powerful constructive and reconciling influence within the Church.

The caution exercised by the authorities of the college in their selection of a professor was justified, not only by the importance of the subject to be taught, but equally by the importance of the college and of the city in which the work was to be done.

Ottawa is the political capital of the Dominion of Canada, but Toronto is without doubt its educational capital. The number and importance of its educational institutions, and its proximity to the United States—it is only thirteen hours by rail distant from New York—give it an international importance to which, at best, only one other great city in the Dominion could even remotely aspire. Within this important educational centre, with its University, and its Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and other colleges, Knox College is one of the most important educational institutions. Of the five colleges of the Presbyterian Church—Halifax in the extreme east, Montreal in the province of Quebec, Queen's in Kingston, Knox in Toronto, and Manitoba—the position of Knox is, in many ways, unique. From its comparatively central situation, east, north, and west are easily accessible, and the number of its students is uniformly large—in the last few years running regularly between sixty and seventy. Every summer students go forth from its walls to carry the ministrations of the Church to the most distant parts of the country—to a distance of from two to three thousand miles to British Columbia in the extreme west, and also to the little known and only partially explored districts of New Ontario in the

north; so that such a position as that of Professor Douglas offered an opportunity and an influence that are quite unique.

Before he came to Toronto the staff numbered four professors and one lecturer. Principle Caven—the present President of the Pan-Presbyterian Council, a man who is known and honoured throughout the length and breadth of the Presbyterian world, and who, for half a century, has wielded an immense influence within the Canadian Church, and is, by universal admission, her wisest man—was in charge of the New Testament department. His oldest colleague was the genial and kindly Dr. McLaren, who, after winning a great reputation as a preacher, has for over a generation held the Chair of Systematic Theology. The venerable Dr. Proudfoot was lecturer on Homiletics and Pastoral Theology. For five years Professor Ballantyne, a much younger colleague, had borne the double burden of the departments of Apologetics and Church History. For three years I had held the Old Testament chair. A recent bequest made it possible to establish a new chair, and the choice naturally fell on the department of Apologetics, to which Homiletics and Pastoral Theology were added, as Dr. Proudfoot was retiring; and Professor Ballantyne was now free to devote himself entirely to Church History.



It may be imagined with what eagerness we welcomed so notable an addition to the staff as that of Professor Douglas, whose name and reputation were familiar to us, even before his appointment to the chair. To me he was especially welcome as a fellow-Scot with whom I could share many interests and friendships formed in Britain. It would be impossible to conceive of anything more perfect or beautiful in its way than Professor Douglas's relation to the various members of the staff. It was not only marked by uniform courtesy—with so chivalrous a nature as Professor Douglas's that went without saying—but by a real and generous respect which, one instinctively felt, merged in affection. To the students, too, his presence, his temper, and his work were a constant inspiration. I knew well when he was with us, and I have learned still more since he left us, how much he did for the men, and how much he was to them. They speak of him still with tears in their voices, as men who know that they have lost what they will not readily find again. To say that he was admired would be but very poorly to characterise their feeling for him: he was loved. They felt the power of his work. He was not an iconoclast; but he was slowly transforming their intellectual world, and presenting the Christian faith in a way that satisfied their intellects as well as their



hearts and consciences. One student I know whose faith was steadied, if not indeed restored, under God, by Professor Douglas—as much, he told me, by the singular beauty of his character as by the sanity and cogency of his apologetic. He had very unconventional views of the nature and function of apologetics, and I should not wonder if the freedom and originality of his thought had much to do with the persuasive attraction which his lectures exercised over his students.

While he steadily kept before him the peculiar needs of the Canadian Church, and the almost fierce pressure of her practical problems, he resolutely maintained, as far as was possible, the scholarly ideals which he brought with him from Edinburgh and Cambridge, and which indeed were integral to his severely conscientious nature; and he uniformly refused to lower his standards of work. A week or two in Professor Douglas's class would be enough to dissipate the dreams of an indolent man, and to disturb his conscience, if he had any. His spiritual influence was as remarkable as his intellectual influence. Everywhere he went he bore about with him an atmosphere of purity, and his presence was a rebuke to all that was unworthy of a Christian and a gentleman. Once a student rashly ventured upon an unseemly remark in the class. The Professor, I

am told, just looked at the man, and said nothing. The look was enough : no one ever risked a similar experiment again.

His eagerness to understand from every point of view the life of the college, the Church, and the country, in which his lot had been cast, was only equalled by his determination to bend all his energies to their welfare ; and his power of assimilating the better elements of the Canadian spirit, of appreciating Canadian ideals, and, in general, of adapting himself to his new situation, was a constant marvel and delight to the Canadians. In order to increase the relevance and effectiveness of his work, he took every opportunity of learning all he could about the nature and problems of the country, and the influences by which it was being moulded. His conception of his duty was not confined to the immediate work of his chair. He preached, when he could, in city pulpits, and he travelled occasionally in inclement winter weather to conduct anniversary services in the country. It was his intention, I know, had he been spared, to do much work of this sort, that he might see with his own eyes the conditions to which his students would afterwards have to address themselves. He was interested, too, in the benevolent work of the city of Toronto ; and at a crowded meeting of the St. Andrew's Society made an

eloquent and memorable appeal for a more extensive use of the Bible in the training of the young.

These are but a few of the fragments of that beautiful life; and I gather them up, as best I can, at the request of his brother. It is hard to say what one would; the subtle and delicate grace of his character eludes analysis. His presence was as the sunshine. It was an inspiration to work by his side, and his friendship was a very precious thing. By his intellectual and spiritual power, by the charm of his presence and the devotion of his service, by his love for the college and for the Church, by the sanity with which he faced the theological problems of to-day, by the sureness and clearness of his own faith in Christian truth, and by his power to lodge it with conviction in the hearts of his students, he more than justified the highest hopes of the Canadian Church. He will be remembered in Canada, not only for what he might have done, but for what he did. Surely a more gracious personality never visited her shores.

While his chair entailed the teaching of pastoral theology as well as of apologetics, it was to the latter subject that he devoted himself chiefly, and particularly in the first

session of his work; and although his lectures, prepared from day to day almost as they were required, were necessarily tentative in their method and arrangement, yet I cannot refrain from attempting to make a slight and general outline of his apologetic teaching.

I shall not, indeed, pretend to give a full or systematic statement of the substance of his lectures. Even if much more material were available than it has been possible to obtain, no purpose would be served by reproducing here in detail lectures which, from the nature of the subject and his treatment of it, were largely critical and historical. But, without attempting such a task, it may be possible to indicate his conception of the subject which he taught, and some of the ideas which governed the substance of his teaching.

He conceived it to be the function of apologetics, not to defend all that might be supposed to belong to Christian doctrine, nor indeed to concern itself with doctrinal questions at all, in a strict sense—"not to establish doctrine, but rather faith," and to constitute, as it were, a set of *prolegomena* to the study of theology.

The nature of these *prolegomena* depended on his way of conceiving theology as a science; and the question of theological method was fundamental to his whole point of view. "The most urgent requirement of theology is a definition of its own method of enquiry"; and he conceived that method as "like that of other sciences, a method of induction and of proof by fact and by experience. The true method of theology is inductive and not deductive; and the way to the knowledge of God is

experience or revelation, not deduction." The subject-matter of theology, conceived in this way, is the whole realm of experience.

If the scope of theology has ever been made less than this, it has been the result of some unworthy narrowing of the idea of God. All facts belong to Her, and of course She regards them from Her own point of view—that is, as the acts of God. Theology has Her own use for all the facts of nature and of life and of human history, finding in all the manifestation of God.

Within its own sphere it is a free, experiential science. Its results, indeed, form part of the matter of an ultimate metaphysical construction; but its special task is to interpret facts, and all facts, in their relation to the point of view which it assumes.

For, like every other science, theology proceeds upon assumptions. The physicist

assumes the existence of matter, without waiting to prove or examine it. In the same way theology proceeds upon the assumption of the existence of God; and Christian theology assumes and accepts the further faith that God is good, and that "God is found wherever goodness is."

It is with these assumptions that apologetics must deal. Plainly, without them there can be no true theology. Before theology can "study God in actuality," there must be "faith in a single spiritual principle of the universe, known as the living mind and thought of God." How theology shall construe these assumptions and how it shall find God "specially and adequately revealed in Jesus Christ"—these are questions that still remain. But the function of apologetics is to make these assumptions reasonable, so that

experience may be accepted as a revelation of God.

The path of apologetic argument is hedged in, first, by the perception that authority can offer no final basis, since authority itself is always open to question; and, once more, by the irrelevance and inadequacy of the forms of strictly scientific demonstration. "Science cannot demonstrate the meaning of Christ's life." "We must have a certainty in religion greater than that obtainable by science, otherwise faith will be an hypothesis to the end. All science knows is probability," and "historical arguments are merely more or less probable." Not only is all external demonstration through miracle and prophecy "difficult and precarious," but—

It is impossible to demonstrate from premises the existence of God. This lies in the very nature of



the case. In such argument there would always be more in the conclusion than in the premises. The idea, indeed, of proof from anything in the world to the existence of God implies that God exists apart from the world; that is, the existence of God as a separate fact is inferred from other facts; and therefore God is conceived to be apart from the world and deducible from the world, and not therefore the reality of all things. But what is proved in this way is not, in the true sense, God; for God is not something apart from the world, but He is the true being revealed in all things. Experience, in its true nature, is spiritual reality; and all our arguments for the Being of God—arguments cosmological, teleological, moral—are really no more than formulations of the way in which the whole structure of our experience compels us to think. In these forms of argument the mind of man develops the higher postulates of reason and conscience as they appear in consciousness through the revelation of God in experience. But they all proceed on the fundamental assumption that we are in contact with reality in experience; and if we take this assumption seriously, and regard all reality as one, there is no longer anything to bridge over between reality and God, or any need to prove or to infer that God exists. A true knowledge of God,

therefore, is possible if, on the one hand, experience is made up of manifestations—however partial—of Absolute Reality, and if, on the other hand, God is revealed in experience as Spirit and as Good.

Concerning the existence of God, then, let us say it is enough to know that this which is partly revealed in our experience is absolute reality. Our certainty of it is never a matter of proof, but depends on a pure act of rational mind. It is a necessary assumption, which reason must make, because without it there would be no knowledge. It can never be proved, because it is a final act of trust, essential to reason. We have experience: we have a world. Let us take them as God drawing near to us. So-called proofs of God's existence are no more than analyses of the process of instinctive reason.

Their inadequacy is thus a matter of minor importance. The very fact that they are merely analyses makes them inadequate; and we must use in them ideas so little applicable as that of cause and effect. The essential point is that the evidence of God's existence is self-evidence, and

consists in the impossibility of thinking otherwise; and there is nothing singular or irrational in this fact, that the foundation of religious experience is an act of faith. "Faith is the basis of science and of life," and "its instincts, in their purity, are far from being contrary to reason, or apart from reason, but are really reason in its vital exercise." They are the rational foundation of experience.

The faith that the universe is one, and that we can know reality—the postulate that absolute reality is partly known in experience—means that experience is capable of revealing God. For, having assumed an absolute existence—undefined but manifested—we have to ask not whether this existence be God, but what God is; and the nature of absolute reality becomes partly known to us by experience, revelation, disclosure. We do not, therefore, assume anything, so far, regarding His nature. Experience declares it to us. We set out, in the faith of His being and presence, to discover His character; for we are compelled by the necessary assumption of reason

not only to accept the existence of an ultimate single reality, but also to take it as revealed in experience.

But it is of the very essence of our experience that the manifestation of God in it is not purely intellectual. Will, also, is an element in reason; and faith which works experience is guided by moral instinct. In seeking to know God as a God of reason—an object of personal faith—we seek to discover Him also as a God of purpose—moral order—personal goodness.

This is the more obviously essential since “belief in a moral order is implied in an intellectual trust”; and “faith in right is the basis of faith in truth, and is more fundamental.”

All great questions of faith, when deeply considered, resolve themselves into moral issues; and therefore the question of religious certainly can never be rightly considered as merely an intellectual one. The certainty is moral; and such a moral certainty is the faith which is the basis of life as well as of its ideal constructions in religion, science, and philosophy.

Knowledge is trustworthy only as held on faith.

Moral life rests on a foundation of faith—that

righteousness is best and that right is good. It assumes the supremacy and adorableness of goodness and moral excellence, and the recognition of the highest goodness as the revelation of true Reality or God. The identity of moral goodness with ultimate reality is not indeed self-evident. But the adorableness of moral worth is essentially self-evident. It is a matter of moral recognition and appreciation, a moral determination, a movement of the moral and emotional nature. It is a faith which verifies itself in a coherent experience; for the man who believes that right is best has settled the question of the worth and goodness of life. If he can do right, and he always can, life is worth living. There is in man's moral nature that which satisfies him; and moral experience justifies an assumption of the value and significance of human life without which all argument about God is useless. It is an assumption that may still be made, a faith that may still be held, though the question of the goodness of the powers at work in nature be still unsettled.

It follows, then, that while "in appearances and in appearances alone can we find knowledge of reality," moral faith is implied in experience itself—

And we have the right to conceive God in the light of the highest forms of experience. God is most adequately revealed in and through persons rather than in and through things.

We thus come to conceive of man as a manifestation of God; and we may reasonably hold that the process of man's fashioning cannot be a matter of indifference to God. The evolution of man is a progressive disclosure of God. The revelation of the character of God is enriched in the progress of man.

This whole revelation of God must be spiritually discerned. The universal order, man and his spiritual life, the records of Hebrew religion, the character and deeds of Christ, are simple and understandable facts. But they need interpretation. To receive revelation of God, we must feel that we are in the presence of the One and the Eternal—must esteem all reality as Divine. To receive a moral revelation, we must have sympathy with purity and right in human life. Revelation is morally apprehended—a matter of moral judgment, of faith, of valuation.

To the whole process of revelation the Bible is the supreme contribution.

The old conception, indeed, of Scriptural revelation—as a compendium of doctrines about God, a

supernatural communication of truths inaccessible to reason—is open not only to the objection that ideas inaccessible to reason are incapable of being received and understood by men, but also to the fundamental defect that it is not in accordance with the facts; since no such revelation has been given.

But the Bible is the record of supreme Divine revelation. It is not itself revelation, but the written record of a life in which God is revealed. It is “literature, not dogma,” or more truly it is the record not of dogma, but of a life which was in a peculiar sense a revelation. It was so in two correlative but distinct aspects. For man’s knowledge of God is both a revelation to him of God as an object of knowledge and also itself a Divine gift, Divinely originated. Inspiration—the Divinely guided apprehension of God—is an essential part (and by far the most significant) of Divine

revelation. It is itself a revealing fact—the highest of all manifestations of God.

It was so regarded by the prophets of the Old Testament; it was so felt in the consciousness of Christ; it stands so in the faith of Christendom. "Thou wouldst not seek Me hadst thou not already found Me."

The men of the Old Testament—the prophets and the psalmists and the saints—saw God in their own experience and their spiritual calling. They believed that they knew God, and that, if they saw Him in His works and ways, it was He that taught them to do so; and in this teaching, not less than in its results, was He at work and revealed—His nature and His purposes thus far made known guiding, calling, redeeming men. With a growing apprehension of right as God's will, and of belief that man and nature are called to serve Him, they ascribe their religious enjoyment to God's gift, and they accept their calling to be in life God's servants. In the true Israel, as the prophets understood it, there was a high life and a singular religious experience consciously recognised as the work of God in human life.

Belief in an immanent God, revealed in greater or in less degree, is a natural avenue to belief in Christ



as the supreme revelation of God. To see what there is in Christ, there must, indeed, be admiration of all that is good and beautiful in character; but if there be this sense of moral proportion, the lower revelations in nature lead to the fullest revelation in Christ. This does not mean that the lower and the higher are of similar value, or that nature will explain Christ; for, when progress and development obtain, the result is greater than the process; and Christ is the result, the end, the climax and culmination of revelation. It is true that all things in their degree manifest one power; yet that degree is various; and it was in Christ that the Spirit of God was, for the minds of men, without measure.

The significance of Christ as the revelation of God appears in the impression of Divine greatness which He makes on our minds. It is conveyed by those who saw and knew Him—by their sense of His spiritual greatness, His strange authority, His infinite pity and tenderness that made sinners ashamed and yet did not drive them away. Nowhere else is anything like this impression. We recognise every single element of perfection in that calm mind, that self-possession, that fulfilment of life's purpose without haste or rest or fear. This is true manhood, we say, and more than human. Indeed, we cannot think of God at all except in the revelation of Christ. We

cannot leave out of account one so significant. If we believe that everything reveals God, if we scan heaven and examine earth to find Him, then surely we have something to arrest us here. We must pause at Christ, and we are the more compelled to this when we consider what He said of Himself. Our faith in Christ rests, in the last resort, on His faith in Himself. He knew Himself as we cannot know Him. He knew the Divine as we cannot know it. But no one doubts that He offered Himself to men as in some sense their Saviour. He claimed to be the Messiah—to have Divine qualifications for establishing the kingdom of God; and this meant that He claimed to be the climax and fulfilment of God's purpose in human life, the centre of the world's history, to whom the past led up and whose it was to command the future. It meant that the whole purpose of the world was committed to Him—to fail or to succeed. It was a claim that was supported by His character. The sinlessness of Jesus is the supreme instance of His Divinity. It is the miracle of miracles, the fact of facts, the most significant of all things. The character of Christ is the effulgent centre of history. Who can forget it? Who can make little of its meaning? It is witnessed by the endless confidence, the unquestioning worship, of His friends, by the silence of His enemies and the tacit admission of all

men, by His pure conscience that never accused Him, though it tried Him by standards that lie beyond our estimates. The faultless picture of the gospels could only have been painted from a model. We see Him to be Divine; and our hearts come to rest in Him.

The significance of this is boundless. The nature of a moral being is His character. If His thoughts are Divine, if He does God's will perfectly, what is wanting? You have in this the inner life of God. The nature of a moral being is his will; and Christ's will was wholly occupied with the purpose of God for men. This makes Him different from all other men. Not only was He better, not only was He blameless; but the very nature of His will—the thing He lived for, the object which made Him what He was—was the design of God in the world.

After all, personal life is so much more than all other things that the fullest revelation of God could only be in a person. A brief and earthly life reveals God's heart; and that is enough. But no other revelation could have achieved this. Nothing can reveal character but character; and love only can reveal love. If there had been in God nothing to reveal but power, then it would have been otherwise, and the scholastic contention might have been true—that God might have been revealed if He had so chosen in a stone. But a revelation of

love could only be made in a person. Nature cannot tell us the meaning of the whole. The revelation of Christ means that it is not force nor bulk, but love that is most Divine. "In the universe we see the scale of God's being, but in Christ His spirit."

By such views and arguments as these, developed in criticism and historical interpretation, did Halliday Douglas attempt the task which he set before himself as a teacher of apologetics, "to present God as the absolute reality and ideal of goodness, and to present Christ's character as the highest to bow to and adore."

His constant effort was to simplify, "to distinguish between what is vital and what is unessential," and to liberate the minds of his students both from the uncritical indolence to which belief seems easy, and from the timorous spirit that makes men think the citadel of faith is insecure because

all its reputed outworks are not equally defensible.

In the spring of 1902 Halliday Douglas returned to Cambridge with his wife and child, intending to spend the summer in Scotland, and to return to a more settled home in Canada in autumn. He was in good spirits, full of projects of writing and teaching. But it became urgently necessary to take medical advice; and it was forthwith decided that he should undergo an operation for appendicitis. The operation was performed with apparent success. But acute peritonitis set in, and in spite of all efforts he sank rapidly, and died in Edinburgh on June 15th.

Once he himself, in presence of a like calamity, wrote these words :

The only thing I can see is that there are qualities in character created, and a depth of

sympathy drawn out, and an absoluteness of submission demanded by these crushing blows, which nothing else could evoke. If all sorrow had its alleviations, or could be plainly seen to be good at bottom, life would be easy! And if life were easy, what would it ever teach us? Perhaps it is the very essence of discipline in life that we should be under a Law as hard and as outwardly indiscriminating as this grinding wheel of physical law every now and then shows itself to be. Perhaps life needs to be stern; perhaps, if there is to be any such thing as sorrow at all—to put the pathos into life, to teach us sympathy, to drive our thoughts to the Eternal, and to submit us—perhaps to make such experiences real and keen in us, the sorrow must be real and keen, must be sorrow with an edge, sorrow bitter, inexplicable, without one earthly consolation. Perhaps the inexplicableness of it is just its virtue. We must try to think so; for Christ believed in God—upon the Cross believed in God.

# Sermons





## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

I HAVE been asked by Mr. Douglas to write a short Note of Introduction to the papers of Professor Halliday Douglas which are here published.

I think that it should be said at once that these papers have not been published without some hesitation. Professor Douglas was very sensitive about publication ; and he had a high ideal of what he regarded as its legitimate demand. Moreover, I question if he had as yet come to be at his best in writing. I think that he was at his best in unrestrained conversation. These papers are published for those that knew

him, and they will touchingly remind them, I think, of two things which made Professor Douglas's friendship a pure gift of God to them—the regal strength of his intellect and the reverent tenderness of his affections.

I imagine that it was his strength that first impressed those who met Halliday Douglas. Strength had a high place in his spiritual ambition. I remember that the great burden of one of the last prayers which he offered in a small circle of intimate friends was, “Lord, make us strong.” He sought strength, and he possessed strength. I should not say that his life's service was strenuous: there is something of artificiality in that, and Halliday Douglas was essentially simple; but it was, from the beginning to the very end, strong.

No reference to this would be at all complete that did not recall his physical

beauty. He was tall and broad-shouldered ; his complexion was singularly fair, and his eyes blue. But it was no special gift of body, it was his presence which carried with it strength. When he entered a room, his presence seemed to bring with it the joyous, healing strength that comes with sunshine.

It was undoubtedly by his *intellectual* strength that Halliday Douglas chiefly impressed those that knew him. His mind was singularly pure and singularly strong. I do not think that I have known any man who so consistently impressed me with sheer intellectual strength. It was strength, not subtlety. At times his mind seemed simply to forge through intellectual difficulties, and habitually it moved through large subjects in a large and almost massive way. His mind, too, was singularly candid. He had a passion for intellectual honesty.

And this suggests a quality in his intellectual strength that should not be overlooked. I mean its gravity. One did not wonder at the agility of his mind: one was reverently impressed by its seriousness.

And his friends knew the secret. His mind was naturally strong, and he carefully educated it and disciplined it. He had learning and a wide culture; and these gave a certain largeness to his whole way of thinking that carried with it weight. But there was something deeper. I think that Halliday Douglas was the most purely religious man that I have ever known. I do not speak of older men who have long walked with God. I speak of younger men. His whole being, so long as I knew him, was devotedly religious. And it seemed to him imperative to serve God with the

strength of his mind. He had a burning intellectual conscience. Reality was sacred to him. To seek truth was to seek God; and this gave a greatness and a gravity to his purely intellectual life that his friends can never forget.

I well remember how often he spoke of the service to the kingdom of God which they render who simply seek truth, and who will rest only in the real. We grieve that apparently so little remains for us and for the world of Halliday Douglas's strong thinking. That in its strength abides.

It was interesting to his friends to watch how this strength, which at first appeared so conspicuously in his intellect, gradually widened out until it embraced his whole character. There was always about his character a certain appearance of maturity.

Men naturally turned to him for counsel and leaned upon his judgment. But if for a time that maturity was in measure only apparent, it soon became very real. It was beautiful to his friends to see his growing toleration, his charity, his patience with the slow and the unlearned, his enthusiastic appreciation of all that had in it worth. As he developed his whole manhood seemed to increase, and in the discipline of the years his whole being grew bigger, till his character suggested the practical man of affairs—the statesman, no less than the thinker—the teacher.

This was very noticeable on his return from Canada. Great movements in history always fascinated him, and the problem of the Church of Christ in Canada, both in its intellectual and in its practical aspect, possessed him. One of the last things

he said to me was that, while for the sake of those whom he loved he would try to return to this country as often as he could, he was resolved—and he wished to give a just impression of his resolution as soon as he could—to devote the strength of his whole being to that great problem. No work, he felt, could be nobler.

[ There was an impression, I think, at one time, among some who only knew about Halliday Douglas, that in his character the strength of his intellect somewhat restrained the ministry of his affections. It was not so. It was the tenderness of his affections quite as much as the strength of his intellect that won for him the devotion of those who knew him. He placed intellect high in his ideal of character, but growingly he placed the affections higher. So, he thought, one learned Christ. . I remember

his telling me once with great delight that he had found an ideal text from which to preach from a university pulpit—"Covet earnestly the best gifts: *and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.*"            \

This was the secret, I think, of a certain power in his ministry of which he was perhaps unconscious, and of which many of his friends were not aware. It was not simply the intellectual element in his preaching that made his sermons appeal so wonderfully to certain minds: it was the combination of a distinct intellectual contribution, with a reserved tenderness of feeling that showed intimate knowledge of the deep experiences of life and of the sorrows of the soul. And this appeared early, in his ministry at Huntly. An Aberdeenshire country congregation is in many ways an ideal congregation to which



to minister. The people have strength : one can give the hardest thought if only technical phraseology is avoided. But within the strength is a great tenderness, and until that is touched, spirit does not touch spirit. At first at Huntly it was Halliday Douglas's strength that appealed to his people, notably his strength of intellect ; and they were proud of him. But gradually, as they came to know him, and to know that he knew them, a certain tenderness in the strength bound them close to him. And his real power at Huntly was just winning its way, when he was taken to Cambridge.

This reverent and reserved tenderness showed itself also in a manner of which only a few can speak intimately. He was a great comforter. His life was a continuous secret ministry of consolation.

He would not have said that he himself

had specially suffered. But he understood suffering as few do. It is touching now to remember how much of his intimate conversation was about sorrow, and how much of his preaching was about death. Comfort had a growingly large place in his thought of the evangel; and there must be many whose dearest thought of Halliday Douglas is the memory of his hidden ministry of comfort and of cheer.

In saying this, however, I should err if in any way I gave the impression of constraint. Halliday Douglas was one of the happiest men I have ever known. Few got more out of life. God's friendship gave him real joy. And he had favour with men.

He was happy at home. There everything was beautiful, and there his strength and his tenderness shone. May I add that they shone perhaps most winningly around

his little child? I shall never forget the light in his face as he said that one of his joys in being a professor was that he could spend long Sunday afternoons "with Margaret."

And he was happy with his friends. Some of us who were at college with him have kept our friendships in repair by meeting together for some days in the country each year. Halliday Douglas was our sunshine. He radiated happiness. The strength of his presence and its tenderness will be for ever among our most gracious memories; but the joyousness also of that presence we shall never forget.

He had a sermon of which he was fond of speaking, and which he often preached, entitled "Christ's Apostles Young Men." Reverently one wonders is it so also in that unseen world where Christ now is

and where our dead go. We cannot tell. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." But sometimes it comforts, at least a little, those from whom a large part of the light of life has gone as he has been taken, to think that now for ever, Halliday Douglas will serve the Lord Christ with the strength and the beauty of youth.

R. S. SIMPSON.

## I. Spring in the Soul



## SPRING IN THE SOUL

CAMBRIDGE, APRIL 27th, 1902

*As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.*—ISA. lxi. 11.

IN once more addressing you, as it is my privilege to do this morning, I think I ought to bring you from God's word a message of comfort. There is in life, then, a possibility of recovery, of redemption, of repair.

Life is full of evils, of sufferings, of loss, natural sorrows, moral failures; and yet there are, even in natural life, even on earth, and in time, certain limited

powers of recovery, certain possibilities of compensation. There is a tendency, at least, even in life and nature, to recovery and repair. No doubt there are evils which, humanly speaking, are irreparable, outward losses which are never adequately made good, sorrows and absences for which earth cannot absolutely offer any compensation, and failures never to be retrieved; and yet there is, even outwardly, a tendency towards recovery. The unfulfilled tendency towards compensation and repair in the life of the spirit is, as we shall see, a deeper secret of victory over suffering, and of manifest transformation of loss into gain; and the Gospel—the Gospel of the love of God—is a promise of restoration and recovery and repair to the uttermost: redemption to the uttermost is its promise both for the heart and also for the soul.



The whole of the portion of Scripture from which this text is taken is a promise of comfort and repair. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people," it begins, "speak good tidings to Jerusalem"; and in this strain it continues to the end. It is addressed to Israel in her captivity—a captivity that had been the result of her own spiritual decline and moral failure; and it promises her now restoration to her own land again, and a place in God's purpose and God's service after all. It speaks of streams in the desert and springs of water in the dry ground, of the rebuilding of old wastes and the repair of ruined cities, of the fir tree where the thorn had been and the myrtle instead of the brier. It speaks of the renewal of gracious purposes long interrupted, of the accomplishment of hopes long frustrated and delayed,

of the fulfilment of ancient and unchanging promises to Israel, through the miracle of Divine patience and the power of Divine love for her. To Israel so long afflicted, tossed with tempest, and in conflict, it promises restoration and peace with Divine teaching and Divine help. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." The promise is of consolation and liberty and joy and righteousness and praise. The renewal of the religious life, attended by deep inward peace, and by a manifold variety of outward gifts and blessings, which the prophet offers to his people, is likened by him to the renewal of the earth in spring. "As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness

and praise to spring forth before all the nations."

The root idea of the comparison is that of recovery, restoration, and repair, of the renewal of a temporarily suppressed and hindered life—a new root from an old root, a new shoot out of a seed that seemed dead. It suggests a fresh life springing up in glory and beauty and gladness.

I have suggested that the message of hope is one especially appropriate to the present occasion. It is clearly spring-time for you as a congregation; and you are making a new beginning with every possible ground of cheerfulness and hope. You have passed safely through a time of comparative uncertainty and difficulty, by the guidance of the Spirit that is in you, and in the exercise of faithfulness and

patience and mutual consideration; and if you have lost any ground anywhere, which I do not believe you have done, you will soon recover it again; and now you may well look forward to a period of greater privilege and blessing in your Christian fellowship than you have ever yet enjoyed; of more help in your work, of greater enlightenment from the Gospel, and more success in your united effort to advance the Kingdom of God. May all your hopes be abundantly fulfilled and far surpassed!

As individuals, however, many of you need the promise of recovery and the message of comfort and hope for the very opposite reason. Can I forget through what a dark winter some of you have been passing, or how hard it is for you to accept the gladdening omens of the spring? For

some then—a few perhaps—it may be difficult to look forward into life hopefully, or to think that their spirits will recover from the things that have befallen, and they can only feel to-day that their happy and hopeful days are over, that they have had their spring—these long-past days of golden memory—and their summer, and even the early days of autumn peace. “The whole year sets apace”; and only too well they know that earth can have for them no second spring.

Yet for the soul, and for the heart as well, the Gospel tells of salvation to the uttermost; and the love of God, and the mysterious chemistry of spiritual life, promise repair and recovery still and hope for ever. Yes, “beauty” and evident delight for the “ashes” of your hope, softening for your pain, and “the garment

of praise for the spirit of heaviness." "Even as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things sown in it to spring forth."

Now, first of all, let us follow the suggestion of the text, and accept the inspiration of this April morning, by taking a lesson from nature herself. There is in nature a power of recovery and repair which is at once a birth and a suggestion of the possibility, in which faith believes, of restoration and redemption for the spiritual life of man. There is in physical nature an irresistible tendency towards life. This is the obvious meaning of the whole process of evolution. We cannot mistake the tendency of nature towards life and towards ever more and higher life.

This, I say, is the lesson of evolution. Whatever we have to say of the individual,

the type survives, and repeats and improves itself; and the whole physical universe has a wonderful way of recovering itself from the inroads of decay and change. The earth has a magic power of healing its own wounds. "I am astonished at the earth," Walt Whitman says somewhere; "it brings forth such fair things out of such hideous things, such sweet things out of such corruption." The track of the earthquake, or the tempest, or the fire, becomes gradually healed over and covered with greenness; and some of earth's fairest spots were once the scenes of the most frightful convulsions of nature. Recent travellers in South Africa tell us how the battle-fields, whose names will ever carry for us associations of cruel conflicts, and wounds, and death, are already green and smiling places, abodes of sylvan peace.

In individual lives, also, nature shows the same power of healing; and diseased and wounded structures, up to a certain point recover, and adapt themselves by the *vis medicatrix naturæ*.

Of the great law of vitality we are always reminded as often as we witness the annual miracle of spring, when the dead trees break forth in green buds, and the little shoots first appear in the ground. We watch the marvellous spectacle with an inexhaustible wonder as it reveals anew the irrepressible life of nature and its magical power of self-recovery and healing.

The religious feeling of the race has from immemorial days observed the return of spring with devout enthusiasm and celebrated it in joyous rhymes. It has always seemed to bring an irresistible impression of hope, and to bear some mystical and



hidden meaning ; and to Christian hearts, too, it has always been the symbol of spiritual redemption and of the resurrection from the dead. No wonder we have said :

Life is waning, life is brief,  
Death, like winter, standeth nigh.  
Each one, like the falling leaf,  
Soon shall fade, and fall, and die.

But in spring—

The sleeping earth shall wake  
And the flowers shall burst in bloom,  
And all nature, rising, break  
Glorious from its wintry tomb.  
So, Lord, after slumber blest  
Comes a bright awakening,  
And our flesh in hope shall rest  
Of a never-fading spring.

This is in a sense fanciful, although, as I have said, that law of life in nature has a real ethical and theological value ; but we can at least go as far as one of our own living poets, with whose words I shall leave

this lesson—the lesson of redemption seen in nature :

O ancient streams, O far descended wood,  
Full of the fluttering of melodious souls,  
O hills and valleys that adorn yourselves  
In solemn jubilation ; winds and clouds,  
Ocean and land in stormy nuptial clasped,  
And all exuberant creatures that acclaim  
The earth's divine renewal ; lo, I too  
With yours would mingle somewhat of glad  
song.

I too have come from wintry terrors,—yea,  
Through tempest, and through cataclysm of  
soul

Have come, and am delivered. Me the spring,  
Me also, dimly with new life hath touched,  
And with regenerate hope, the salt of life :  
And I would dedicate these thankful tears  
To whatsoever power beneficent,  
Veiled though his kindness, undivulged his  
thought,

Hath led me from the haunted darkness forth  
Into the gracious air and vernal morn,  
And suffers me to know my spirit a note  
Of this great chorus, one with bird and stream  
And voiceful mountain.

In the second place, we are led to believe in the possibility of repair and recuperation by our observation of human nature. The law of recovery and repair which appears in the physical universe, as a condition of vitality, holds good to a certain extent in human nature as well. There is in the moral and mental world also the power of recovery and healing; and we are helped so far to believe in the special redemptive power of religious faith and fellowship with God by what we see of human nature in our ordinary experience and observation of it. There is, no doubt, in human nature a certain elasticity and recuperative power. Time is proverbially a healer, and blunts the edge of the sharpest sorrows. A man cannot go on living without finding interests and experiencing pleasure in them, and forming sufficient attachments to life

and the living world. Even the most solitary and bereaved find that they have some friends in the world, and are bound by new ties, not without a certain amount of satisfaction in them; and those who thought that they never would care for anything again by-and-by discover interests for which they think it still worth while to live. Of course I know there is another side to this. I well remember a friend who had very early in life been deprived of the being he loved best in the world—it was just before they were going to be married. I can never forget the bitterness and resentment with which he spoke of the so-called healing power of time. “Yes,” he said, “I know I shall forget, or partly forget; I know I cannot always feel this as I feel it now, and that as life goes on I shall get taken up with other things. Time will

dull me, and I shall find it difficult even distinctly to remember her I have lost; but that," he said, and you can conceive how real the fact would be to an honest and far-sighted, and at the same time an imaginative, spirit—"that is just the bitterest thought of all and the worst part of what has befallen me." Yes, surely to satisfy our hearts we need some better hope of healing than that of the deadening, and weakening, and mortifying, and destroying power of time.

Besides, there are some sorrows that cannot be forgotten. There are some wounds which are never healed here. That is what you feel about those who have been all in all to you, when they are taken away. Life with them, in whatever difficulties, in whatever poverty or privation, was always a pleasant life. Life without

them is something entirely different; and now time has no effect upon your sorrow and will have none. Sorrow is eternal; and your only hope is in eternity, that, by the mercy of a God of love, the love will prove to have been eternal too.

There is one other possibility of recovery in human nature which I shall mention before passing finally to the distinctively Evangelical aspect of these thoughts, and that is the possibility of moral recovery and repair. There is one failure which is worse than all other failures. It is moral failure: it is sin. We may not feel it; but this is the greatest of all evils, the most disappointing of all disappointments; for here, in the folly of selfishness and self-will, human nature comes short of its true end. Here we miss the mark indeed, and involve ourselves in unimaginable loss and endless

sorrows. This, I say, is the worst failure. This was the failure which the prophet thought to bring home to his people, and for which, in the most blessed and ungrudging part of all his message, he promises them recovery. Even from the worst evil, in spite of all seeming, he promises them deliverance and restoration and repair.

Is this, I wonder, the evil and the failure which we have felt most? I trust it is so. There is a bitterness—is there not? in this which is not in any other sort. This surely is the only real failure in life, the only absolute and unmixed disaster; this, which some of us are thinking of this morning, which we must think of sometimes when we are alone, and sometimes in the silence of the House of God—a marred manhood, spoiled lives, an end missed, a disappointed God. Yet here also,

when we think of it calmly, there are possibilities of recovery and repair; here also while there is life there is hope; in character and the moral life, there are possibilities of redemption—in human nature by the influence and infusion of the Divine grace: by that grace, there are possibilities in life, and a certain elasticity and capacity of change in human nature. There is such a thing as fixity in character; and moral life has its laws, as some of us know, who have tried to break the yoke of old habits, and tried in vain—tried to resist the old temptation, and never for long at a time succeeded yet. There are those fixed and natural laws; and well we know them. What is passed cannot be undone. And yet, thank God, there is a possibility of change as well. New thoughts may enter the



hearts of men, and new motives begin to sway them. Men have always hoped, too, for the forgiveness of God, always hoped and believed that God could be not less but more generous than man can be to man. To the very last hour of life, and even though the past could not be undone and the record of a life's achievement could not be altered, there was always the possibility of a change of mind, a new temper, a new spirit, a new attitude towards God and life; and in that great inward change, in spite of all that must seem fixed and done with, a new man. Or that deep personal change might be made in time for a better life, in time at least for some part of a better life. It was always possible.

But that possibility only became a reality through the power of a belief in the love

of God—only in a conscious or unconscious faith in Divine love and helpfulness. The possibilities of recovery and repair are only fully understood and the hope of redemption to the uttermost is only given through the experience of real and personal fellowship with God. What we could never find in experience of life apart from God, we shall find in living fellowship with Him.

It is here at last that we must look for the fulfilment of the promise of consolation for all our sorrows and deliverance from our worst failures—of our being planted as trees of righteousness, righteousness and praise springing forth in satisfying glory and beauty. “Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree. As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the

garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth."

Let us think first of our spiritual failures, of our moral disasters and calamities. Let us earnestly and sincerely put them first in all our thought and care. Time and the changes of life have not brought you the deliverance you needed. The lapse of time has neither blotted out the record of old sins nor altered the man within. External changes, changes of circumstances, changes in the time of life, have not set your soul above the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the world. Nay, perhaps at one time the first seemed even to grow stronger, and if at another its powers naturally gave way, the second only then asserted itself more mightily; and your appreciation of the world and money and material things only grew as you got older.

Time and change have not helped you ; or if you have learned wisdom, and better thoughts have come to you, they have only taught you with all your heart to long for some overpowering moral inspiration and effectual deliverance.

And now, through the Gospel, that promise comes to you. This is a word of glad tidings, clearer than that which came to Israel by the prophet, and more answerable to those deepest needs of your heart. There is indeed a redeeming power in fellowship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ—a real spiritual peace and a real moral deliverance. In the assurance through Him of the forgiveness of God—forgiveness magnanimous, generous, absolute, and free—there is, in spite of all things, a glorious and unspeakable peace. Be the past what it may, and its con-

sequences what they may, at least they are no longer a cloud between your heart and God. Be your life what it has been, be you what you know you are, there is one thing perfect, one thing without a flaw: it is your Heavenly Father's love. There is one thing complete without drawback or afterthought or grudge. It is His forgiveness.

Even though you know you still shall have to reap the harvest you have sown, yet your very bitterest experiences of that kind will come to you in a different way now—as chastisement now, but not punishment! And you will try to learn by them. You will always be kept humble by them, and all will be well; and the thought of the time you have wasted and the harm you have done—evil, alas and alas! indeed irreparable—shall they not move you to a

passionate devotion and a trembling thankfulness, a lifelong reparation? Yes, but that is not all. Thank God, that is not the whole story of Divine restoration and repair. In God's presence, as we know Him in Christ and live before Him, good thoughts come fast, good purposes grow strong, and evil things droop and die. In our new fellowship new desires are ours, new loves, new loyalties. Weak men grow strong; for a great purpose has seized them and holds them. In the very moment of overmastering temptation and betraying opportunity we are held by the remembrance that we are no more our own. Coarse men grow pure and gentle; and from love to a Lord of love, all fair flowers of character and seemly and heroic actions spring up and grow, "as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth

the things that are sown in it to spring forth."

The character of Christ—the image of God—that is the source, above nature, of spiritual replenishment, of moral influence and moral restoration and repair; and where that perfect, unalterable power of life and purity is present and has weight, there will be a springtime in the soul, and a summer, and a harvest. Where the seed is, the fruit will follow, and the end, everlasting life.

I have already more than once said that the heart as well as the soul shall find its healing; and I ought perhaps to add a word more upon that before I close; but I cannot now do more than affectionately reiterate the glorious and abiding commonplaces of Christian consolation. Your only secure comfort is the comfort of trust. Earth, as

I have already said, contains no comfort for some sorrows—life brings none—no compensation for some losses, no lifting up of the heart again, no balm for mortal wounds. As for eternity, in which your hope lies, you cannot expect now and here to see the ultimate meaning of your experiences. The only real peace is the peace of trust ; but for you, who have tried in the least to measure the love of God in Christ, and who have known anything of the gift you have had in Him, it ought not to be too difficult to trust Him. Even if you have to prize Christ's grace in bitter personal sorrow, and to look with streaming eyes up to your Saviour, if you have actually believed in the forgiveness of sins, if you have actually experienced the reality of spiritual healing and moral inspiration through Jesus Christ, why then you have touched the deepest



pledge that it is possible for God to give, and received the strongest assurance that it is possible for man to receive, of the sincerity and reality of the love of God. You know that life at last and on the whole is good, if you have known God in Christ as the Saviour of the Soul.

As for the ways in which afflictions may be sanctified, it would not become me to say much. I suppose God wants us, above all things, to love Him for Himself alone—not only in gratitude for good gifts given, but even when they are taken away—in His pure spiritual beauty. Or, if this seems a height too far for flesh and blood, we can at least see that it may mean something to us to have through death a link with the unseen eternal world. Unless we had to leave earth, one by one, we should never learn that it is not our home. Perhaps, too,

trial by fire, in deprivations we do not take upon ourselves, makes us stronger and abler for the sacrifices and self-surrenders of daily duty.

When we add that it is by our sorrows, more than by anything else, that we mortals are drawn to one another in heart-sympathy and fellow-feeling, we may understand how those who have been most tried often become the most unselfish and Christlike of human beings ; and when great sorrows deepen humility and increase tenderness and self-detachment, and those who by the will of God have hardly anything of their own left to live for begin with willing hearts to live for others, then indeed the work of God with them is nearly accomplished, and the flowers of grace are growing in the ploughed and watered soil.

But, lastly, the belief that all things shall

at last be repaired belongs not so much to Christian experience as to Christian hope. The promise of the text is not fulfilled on earth for Israel or for any of us. There is, we can see, a redeeming power at work ; nature is its symbol ; experience promises it ; Christ is the pledge of it ; but we are saved by hope. Patience worketh experience, and experience hope. God, through His prophets, as through nature and the good powers at work in life, has promised righteousness. He promised to a people who had sinned and who had failed miserably, as we all have done, repair of their failures as a nation, and as individuals, with restoration to their right life, and final success and victory. It is a great promise ; yet it is just what has been promised, and far more clearly and surely, to those who will take the help in their own lives of the Lord

Jesus Christ. It is as certain as the spring or as the flower from the seed.

And it was not merely an inward or spiritual Heaven of which the prophet spoke to them. It was, as it were, a complete and all-embracing blessedness, the very evidences and insignia of joy were to be theirs, a crest upon the head ("a crest for ashes"), the garments of righteousness, "as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

We really do not know how all things are to work together for good or how some of our losses are ever to be made up to us—our empty lives, our nights of weeping, our solitary years, our spiritual opportunities lost, our moral task simply not accomplished. We do not know how we shall realise gain through loss and

strength through agony, nor how we shall at last discern that all the time it was not loss but gain, not evil but good. We cannot imagine how we are ever to receive an adequate consolation. It is all a hope. Yet it is the promise of all God's way in human life, and of the faith Himself has breathed into the hearts of men, that, after all loss and suffering, to those who trust Him repair shall come at last, spring after all winter, and gain from the long warfare, a lesson out of every experience, and in the end peace and joy proportionate to the very love of God. It is as sure as the coming of the spring. The seed is sown that shall bear this fruit, this harvest. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will set thy stones in fair colours and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And

I will make thy pinnacles of rubies, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy border of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

## II. The Religion of Joy





## THE RELIGION OF JOY

CAMBRIDGE, APRIL 27TH, 1902

*And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.*—MATT. ix. 15.

OUR Lord and His first disciples, moving about Galilee in the early days of their ministry, seem to have produced upon all who saw them an unmistakable impression of gladness and cheerfulness. John had come neither eating nor drinking, and they thought him a gloomy fanatic; “the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they said, Behold, a gluttonous Man, and a

winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

The sorrows of the last months of our Lord's life, and the awful tragedy of its close, have tended to obliterate the recollection of those earlier and happier days. In the lurid glow of that crimson and fiery sunset, we are hardly able to revive the memory of the bright and placid dawn; or its colours seem to pale before the glories of the Resurrection morning. And it is not only we who most naturally think of Christ as the Man of Sorrows or as the Victor of the Cross. To His first disciples He must have appeared even more exclusively in that character; and, in looking back from the end upon the beginning, they would see all things in a certain proportion and perspective. For them also I have no doubt the end, to some extent, obscured

the beginning ; and in framing their recollections of their Lord, it was natural to keep the end in view. We must remember that in what they have handed down to us they had to select and to omit, to bring some things into prominence, to set others in the background of the picture ; and in our Gospels, which, as we know, took their present shape through years of practical work in preaching and teaching, it is natural that everything should lead up to the lesson of the Cross. Everything which seemed to foreshadow that or to throw light upon it was brought into strong relief ; and all the beginnings of Christ's great warfare with sin—whatever savoured of conflict, whatever looked towards the Cross—was carefully preserved and emphasised ; while all that seemed less closely connected with the great central meaning of Christ's life might

be permitted to fall into the background. In the central foreground stood the Cross ; and naturally it hid many things from view ; and not only so, but the “feeling,” as painters say, of the Cross subtly pervades the whole composition.

Under these circumstances it was natural that the peaceful beginnings of Christ’s mission and the first success of the Kingdom should not be greatly dwelt upon in the Gospels, and that the note of simple gladness, which was the first that the Kingdom of Heaven struck upon earth, should be heard now only as an undertone in the overture to the Christian Hymn of Praise. Yet the note is heard ; and I ask you to lend your ear to its peculiar quality of sweetness, because without it the harmony is incomplete. There is a great lesson to be learnt by recalling the gladness

of the early days in Galilee and joining ourselves for a few minutes to the cheerful company of the Master and His disciples.

The Gospels, do, as I have said, in spite of their general perspective and prevalent colouring, present to us traces, slight but unmistakable, of this first happy time. Among such traces is our text, where the followers of John wonder at the liberty of Christ's service, and He compares His disciples to a wedding party. Another is the reproach of the Pharisees against Jesus as a free liver, and His likening Himself to the children that piped and contrasting Himself with those that wailed ; and all through the first pages of the Gospels an attentive eye will see Christ and His companions moving to and fro among men, and bearing a cheerful part in all that belongs to human life.

Now, it cannot be without a meaning that the first note of the Kingdom of Heaven was the note of gladness and of the consecration of common life. I wish this morning to dwell on the significance of this fact. Christ, we know, intended to exemplify by His own way of life the spirit of His religion, to show what manner of life it was into which He lived and died to bring us; and in this life there was the consecration of common things, and the sanctification of natural gladness. The beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven, again, may be expected to set the tone for all that was to follow. The peculiar spirit of the beginning may be expected to remain the permanent and characteristic idea in the spirit of the Kingdom. Nay, it may even be expected that the dominant note should be struck at the beginning, and that if the

Kingdom begins in gladness, its essential meaning should be joy. And this is so. Its essential meaning is joy. Not only so, but natural earthly gladness always has a place in it also. For the gladness of the Christian's life is two-fold. His greatest gladness is simply the possession of a spiritual life which satisfies his deepest longings. In the fellowship of Christ, in the design of God going forward in his own and other lives, he has a deep inward joy. That possession he keeps, whatever else he may have or lose ; and he may even grow richer in this through his losses ; and so that gladness raises him above natural sorrows and turns sorrow itself into joy. Thus, the law of this life—under Christ's omnipresent power—is hope, progress, victory. Real triumph and real success are promised to us by a Power above

our own ; and we may rejoice. In this sense certainly the ultimate meaning of Christianity is joy. If joy was its first word, joy is its last word also. In this sense the early gladness of the Kingdom was most appropriate : it was a symbol—a symbol of spiritual peace and final victory. But besides spiritual peace there is in the Christian life a place for natural gladness. There is a use of earthly life, and there is a use of earthly joy. It is not by an accident that we are left in this life as we are ; and it is not the duty of believers in God and in Christ to seek to escape from it, but rather to find in time and life an opportunity and an aid towards what is Divine and eternal. Nor is earthly joy superfluous. It surely can be made a part of our appointed discipline, humbling and overwhelming as happiness is to loyal and



grateful hearts, speaking to us as it does of the goodness of life as God has made it, assuring us too, by way of foretaste or symbol, of an escape at last into joy out of all sorrow. In these ways God makes happiness of use to men, and it has a place in Christians' lives. And so, what was so prominent in the first days of the Kingdom—the natural and innocent enjoyment of all that is good in life—continued to have its place in Christianity. We may take the bright beginning of the Gospels both as a symbol of spiritual victory and as a sanctification of natural gladness.

To dwell particularly this morning upon the latter aspect, I should like to remark first of all upon the freedom and reasonableness of Christ's religion. Christ, of course, imposed a rule upon men. The cheerfulness of the Kingdom of Heaven was not

a careless cheerfulness ; its simple joys did not mean self-pleasing ; there was a law high and binding ; there was a service difficult and exacting. But Christ's law, though it was so high, was one that could be obeyed in liberty and gladness ; and His service, even when it has exacted the utmost of self-sacrifice, has never done so as the enemy of natural joy. Christ's religion, we must always remember, brought to men an immeasurable relief. We know how high, in one sense how severe, was His demand—what an ideal of perfection He set before His disciples, and what surrender His service required of them ; and yet when He compared His religion with the yoke, as it was called, of the Law, and the burden which the Scribes laid upon men's shoulders, He could say, “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

For one thing, Christ's religion begins from within ; and it is a fact borne out by all experience that the religion which consists of outward observances and begins with outward rules becomes an intolerable burden. A religion of the heart, even if it be more difficult, is less painful : while infinitely more complete, it is less burdensome. Then for all that Christ's Kingdom required there was a reason. Religion becomes a burden when it means the observance of artificial duties which are imposed by an arbitrary command, and of which one cannot see the use. For all a Christian's duties and a Christian's sacrifices there is a reason ; and the reason is Love. So Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light, for this reason, lastly, that He places love in the heart, and love is the fulfilling of the Law. Christ asked no

sacrifice and imposed no duty except such as are included in love, and none which love, if we give way to it, cannot transmute to joy.

We can understand, then, the gladness of those who first received this new sort of religion, and this new guide to duty. We are hardly able perhaps to enter into their experience, who have never groaned under a burden of unreasonable and incomprehensible human customs and commandments, and taken them for the will of God. We can hardly understand the satisfaction with which they discovered that these things were not God's will, but the commandments of men. But, in proportion as we have in some degree known any such bond, we can realise the sense of relief and the rebound of feeling with which one escapes into a freer and clearer air.

We must remember that, in giving men a new understanding of their duties and turning labour into joy through love, Jesus definitely set them free from many things which they had considered binding upon them. The fasting mentioned in the text was only one of many painful observances and laborious ceremonies from which Christ granted His disciples absolute dispensation. Nothing was necessary except what love required ; and no custom and no ceremony was binding upon men, save only in so far as it might fit them for the service of the Kingdom of Heaven. Here plainly Christ's yoke was easier than the yoke of the Pharisees, and His way of life more welcome, even to human nature, than that which the Pharisees or John required. Fasting, we remember, was then universally practised by all who called themselves

earnest or religious. Christ's dispensing with it constituted a religious revolution ; and it is not difficult to understand that Christ was welcomed when He thus gave to men both peace for their troubled conscience and rest for their tired flesh. It still needs to be said about Christ's religion that if it requires of men more of purity and of brotherhood than their thoughts of religion have ever conceived, it requires less of ceremony and rite than their systems have often imagined.

But now, in the second place, such a religion must set men free to a certain real extent for the natural and innocent joys of life. Christ's service has indeed its stern demands, its awful severities ; only, it does not require sacrifice for sacrifice's sake, or pain as an end in itself. Its labours—this is our faith—are expended for a great

object ; and all its pains are stages on the way to joy.

This great principle of Christianity appeared in the early controversy between Christ's disciples and those of John the Baptist. John seems, at least to some extent, to have valued pain and self-denial for their own sake. He lived an ascetic life. He fled the society of men, and even the more cheerful aspects of nature ; and in the solitude and hardships of the wilderness it seemed to him that God could best be served. He fasted, and sought to mark the separation of his spirit by outward peculiarities in his manner of life. In all these things Jesus was his very opposite. Jesus did not altogether deny the possible propriety of fasting. When fasting is an appropriate expression of real feeling, by all means let men fast ; only fasting is not

a rule of religion. Jesus did not suppose, either, that men must not be called to hardship in God's service. By-and-by, when the work of the Kingdom called, He asked His disciples to leave their happy Galilean homes. They went round Galilee for the last time together; they sheltered together in the recesses of Hermon; and then, leaving all, they set forth to distant and menacing Jerusalem, and to the shame and danger of the Cross.

But meanwhile, and in the period of the work of the Kingdom of which I am speaking this morning, they had not left their homes, but lived and laboured unmolested in Capernaum. This single instance proves conclusively the spirit of Christ's religion and the nature of His service. The hardships He requires are not for hardship's sake, but for His ends.



Christianity is not sacrifice, but service ; not suffering, but obedience. Christ did not call His disciples all the time to suffering ; but they were always at His call. It is not that there are intervals in our service, but that now in one, now in another way we serve Him. When our way lies through peace and joy, it need not mean that we have left Christ's path, but only that He is making the flowers spring about our feet. After all, it is still in God's world that we serve Him, still among men ; and this means that our service cannot be altogether without natural interests and natural joys.

We cannot be wrong in ascribing to our Lord Himself a keen and genuine interest in the world of nature and of human life. He did not follow John to the gloomy wilderness. He remained in gracious and sunny Galilee, among the cornfields, the

vineyards, the birds and flowers and men ; and, again, the chief scene of His labours was not a solitude, but the most populous district in the land, that of the busy commercial city of Capernaum. John seems to have felt that even nature, in its brighter and more attractive aspects, interfered with the recognition of the Divine ; and certainly for his own part he forsook the common and natural life of man to pursue God's service. But Jesus evidently saw nothing in His Father's works to distract Him or others from His Father's service. He did not ask His disciples to turn away their eyes from the beauty or the interests of nature ; and it is certain that these were not indifferent to Himself. He has marked the beauty of the lily. He has pondered the mystery of growth. His talk of seed-time and harvest, of the birds and

their food, of the flowers in their painted coats, shows how deeply He had drunk of these pure sources of pleasure, and how real His interest was in the visible works of God. With the same genial regard He looked on all that was natural in human life. As I have already said, He deliberately chose to remain in the very thick of human secular life, to be one of the busy motley crowd, and to stand in full view of all the natural occupations and engagements of mankind. Once more we can see what must have occupied His mind. We see that He has thought it worth while to grasp all the detail and intricacy of human life and society in the strong, calm, comprehensive wisdom of the parables. Shepherds and husbandmen and fishermen, great lords and their households, the sumptuous courts of the palace, poor

wretches in the debtors' prisons, the labour market, and the children at their little charades—Jesus had seen them all. "Christ's survey of the world," says a great writer, "considered as a mere intellectual passion, enthrals and fascinates us;" and especially in these early days He moved familiarly among men, going to their weddings, living in their houses.

And if this was the Master's spirit, it was reflected in the manner of life of the disciples. They never, like John for example, sought to express the peculiarity of their calling by outward singularities of dress and habit. When the time came, their work separated them with sufficient completeness from the world. Meanwhile, every one noticed the difference between Christ's disciples and the enthusiastic

religionists of the day ; and it taught the lesson that the spirit of Christianity is not dependent on one mode of life rather than another, but can realise itself in many forms and various vocations. It taught that Christ's spiritual kingdom is to establish itself within human society, and that its natural life is to be led among the common ways of men.

And all this meant naturalness and gladness ; so, if there is beauty in God's world, and if there is an interest in living among men, we Christians are allowed to share in these. It can only be in part that any earthly thing is given to us ; it may only be for brief moments and as it were in snatches that such joys are ours ; at any moment in various ways our supreme obligation may call us away from them, or God in His wisdom see fit to deprive

us. Still, what we have had is in a sense always ours, and we shall always retain the impression of what has been permitted to us.

What I wish to express this morning is the manner in which Christianity is permeated, so to speak, and coloured by the spirit of liberty and by its generous sanctification of natural joys. It is only a corollary to God's Fatherhood that nothing good or beautiful should be denied to His human children, save only as it might deprive them of the highest blessings which His wise love desires to bestow; and the truth and beauty of the Kingdom of Heaven will always be symbolised for us by the gladness of its beginnings upon earth—its beginnings in so much cheerfulness and hopefulness, I had almost said in gaiety and lightness of heart.

In this way, too, we are made to feel that Christianity and nature are one—natural and spiritual order coming from the same hand. Those peaceful days in Galilean fields and streets were not unfruitful for the Kingdom, if they afforded an opportunity to the great Teacher of giving His kingdom a connection and analogy with all real and living things. There is a peacefulness and beauty in the regularity of physical nature; and something of this has passed through our Lord's Galilean teaching into our thoughts of spiritual things; and we feel that religion, instead of being a thing hostile and irreconcilable to our human life, is but the crown and fulfilment of all that is highest and best in it, when Jesus tells us that in God there is a Father's love and a Shepherd's care.

Now, I hope you do not think I have exaggerated the impression of the gladness and enthusiasm of the Kingdom of Heaven that is produced by these early Galilean stories. I repeat that one requires to look a little closely into the first pages of the Gospels to discover their characteristic spirit, to disentangle some elements and recollections now half hidden in a story which was composed, under a later and very different impression, in the immediate recollection of Calvary, to fill up a picture from a few slight but clear and significant lines. I repeat also that the first undisturbed gladness was only for a season; the harder part of the work had not yet begun; the disciples had not left their homes. They were experiencing also the first relief of emancipation from fast and ritual into a more spiritual service.



The Gospel was enjoying its first apparent triumph, which seemed a considerable triumph; and the season of popular favour was longer in actual duration than in the proportion of space now given to it in the narrative. The Master was followed by enthusiastic crowds—the same who afterwards said, “Crucify Him!” Jesus distrusted such success; but He did not yet communicate His fears to His disciples. The change came soon enough. Soon the clouds began to gather, and when at last the evening fell, one could hardly believe that the dawn had been so calm and bright. At first that sweet and happy time was quite forgotten; but by degrees its spirit has made its contribution to Christianity.

The evidence of the spirit of those first days at least cannot be passed over. The

representations of the Pharisees, the questionings of John's disciples, show that the impression made on all who saw Christ's company was one of liberty and gladness. The Son of Man came not fasting, not forbidding, but eating and drinking, the Friend of publicans and sinners. Jesus Himself freely admits the contrast between Himself and John ; and He could hardly have revealed the spirit of these days more clearly than by likening the company of His disciples to a wedding party, the companions of a bridegroom in the very hour of joy.

But you will remember, finally, how He made lightness of heart a religious duty, and declared that whatever trouble or whatever service life may contain, it is the duty of every one who believes in God to live by the hour. The very spirit which

He illustrated in Himself and His disciples, in the days of the Galilean peace, has received perfect expression from His own lips when He said : "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment ? Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father knoweth them. Are ye not much better than they ? . . . And why take ye thought for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. . . . Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

But now you will say for us in life

such gladness is not possible. Life is too difficult ; it is really impossible for a reasoning being, for a person who knows life and its realities at all, to go through the world in this peace and lightness of heart, the spirit of a guest or of a merry-maker. Life's burdens are not imaginary ; its toil at times is an almost intolerable load ; its duties are a tremendous tax upon us ; they gall and hamper and restrict us ; we may try to perform them, but it cannot be without grudging ; we may submit, but it cannot be with a good grace ; and this life's sorrows and its disappointments simply confuse and perplex us, embitter us, and drive us to despair. As for Christianity, it seems only to make life more serious and painful than ever, such struggle, such self-denial, such sacrifice as it requires of us. It is because it seems the very negation of all natural joy

that so many of us cannot face its claims ; and for those who do undertake it there may indeed be supernatural and unearthly joys, mystic raptures, invisible rewards ; but simple cheerfulness and earthly gladness, these surely are left for ever behind.

So I should like you to notice that Jesus Christ here, in defending and justifying the innocent joy of His disciples, recognises also the existence and necessity of pain. Even the brightest days of the kingdom lay already under the shadow of the Cross ; and here the thought of the bridegroom and his friends awoke in Jesus' mind a sudden presentiment of the end when the bridegroom should be taken from them. Yet even that was to Him no reason why they should not do God's will now in the spirit of peace and joy, and take the gladness of the hour.

This of course meant that He saw also some use and meaning in their pain ; without that faith it would not have been possible for a moment, surely, to rejoice.

For those who possess no sense of reconciliation to the painful side of life, two things only are possible—either the coming change and sorrow and death will poison all their present peace, or else they must close their eyes to these coming things, and find a temporary refuge in forgetfulness. For some, sorrow does effectually poison joy. Of those who forget, some do it carelessly ; but some act deliberately, setting themselves in a hopeless way to cherish an illusion, to feel their pleasures, and, as far as possible, to ignore their pain, and counting it the very wisdom of life to pluck the flowers at their feet with face averted from the coming storm.

Jesus—and this is the Spirit of His religion—foresaw the coming Cross, and yet claimed for Himself and His disciples the gladness of the hour. He did not need to forget or ignore the sorrow. He recognised it, yet it did not hinder joy. Jesus saw a use in sorrow; for here we recall the deepest gladness of Christ's giving—the possession which is indestructible and beyond the reach of sorrow, the spiritual strength which gains through trial, the spiritual peace which grows deeper in sorrow. We fall back upon the last foundation of the faith that Christ has taught us—that with God to serve and eternal aims to live and die for, sacrifice is never loss uncompensated, sorrow never sorrow unrelieved, His own Cross the supreme example.

I have suggested that the joyous begin-

ning of Christ's kingdom proclaims to all time how gladness is the spirit and victory the promise of the Gospel. I add that the gladness and hope of the Gospel are a gladness and hope held in the very face of sorrow. Only on such an understanding of sorrow can there be joy in a clear-eyed and deliberate view of life. If the future sacrifice and sorrow, to which He looked forward for Himself and them, had been for Christ and His disciples mere loss, they could not now have had any joy. If the bridegroom had been destined to be taken away for ever, they could not have postponed their grief. But if joy comes after all things, if the last word remains with joy, then sorrow is an incident, and death is an incident; then but then alone, joy may be the rule for life; and we may be bidden and com-



manded to rejoice; and sorrow may wait its time, because sorrow is not the end but a passing phase of things, not the rule but the exception.

Two things follow.

One is that there is no virtue in making ourselves unhappy; and all superfluous self-denial, all gratuitous mutilation of life, all man-made and artificial obligations of rites and ceremonies, save only for edification, and that in measure, are forbidden by the glad and free spirit of Christ's kingdom.

This also follows, that there are times for joy as well as for sorrow; and sorrows are not to be taken before their time. There is a time to laugh. Joy is the rule; and while the lasting claim of God upon our lives may at any time address an unexpected call to us, and

the ever-impending necessity of the Kingdom of Heaven at any time descend upon us with an urgent and a great demand, or God's discipline of our spirit at any time ask sorrow, yet meanwhile, so long as He causes the fair flowers to blossom by the path, we are to view them with a glad and unsuspecting eye, and rejoice like little children in the gifts of our Father's hand. For His sake, and as the least possible recognition of His goodness, we are to know and admire and enjoy.

We should all, I think, be the better for a larger infusion of this temper in our lives; and it would make us sweeter, happier, and more cheerful if in our more fortunate and more peaceful hours we sought to catch the light of that sunny dawn of the Kingdom of Heaven, the

filial spirit of its happy childhood. It was intended to teach us something, that this was the first note struck—a sound of trust and gladness, an echo of the love of God. In the overture it is only a single note or a few light chords at most, soon giving place to deeper and more thrilling tones; yet in the after harmonies all the themes must be represented; and none should be heard more frequently, as none certainly was present more victoriously at the close, than this note of gladness, of reconciliation, and of hope.

The Kingdom of Heaven came. Its first effect upon men's hearts was gladness. Its first months saw enthusiastic victories, some real successes. There have been delays, there have been labours, there has been the Cross; but victory from first to last has been the story, liberty and gladness its

accompanying spirit, and joy its goal—joy made perfect, and life more abundantly.

I am inclined to think also that a joyous and grateful spirit is the best preparation for the harder experiences of life. In a true man happiness is as humbling as sorrow is apt to be crushing. To learn God's love by laying to heart His goodness, and sincerely to feel our unworthiness of all His wonderful and beautiful gifts in life, is at once a sweet and certain way to arrive at submission when things go against us, and at trust when Galilee is far behind us and we have reached Gethsemane.

### III. Public Spirit



## PUBLIC SPIRIT

HUNTLY, NOVEMBER 20TH, 1892

*Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?—*  
LUKE ii. 49.

### I

OUR Lord Jesus Christ in the home at Nazareth and in the carpenter's shop lived the perfect life—the life without sin, and perfectly pleasing to God. He has thus, as we delight to think, consecrated home-life and common toil, and shown us that in our homes, and in the pursuit of a so-called secular calling, we might (if we would) live, without sin or shortcoming, a life well-pleasing to God. But the example of Jesus reveals also another

aspect of human life. He has shown us—has He not?—a work to be done for God—a world-wide good to be sought, a moral cause to be served—which leads us beyond the narrower domestic circle and beyond the round of necessary occupation. The ends of God in human life are not fulfilled by our regarding those immediately about us, nor by our discharge of any occupation which looks only to material ends, and ends that concern this present life. Our common life acquires its moral value by providing opportunities of doing duty, of imitating Christ, of pleasing God: nothing is common, and nothing is secular, in which the right spirit is exercised and a God-like character is being formed. But then for the true life of men as spiritual beings, and for the pursuit of this Divine and supernatural ideal, there is required not



merely a temporal or secular calling, but the service of a Kingdom of Heaven, not any narrow and private circle of interests, duties, and affections, but a love to all mankind. The most ordinary duty may be discharged in a truly Divine spirit; but this Divine spirit will also call us to duties and services higher than all natural ties.

Roughly speaking, our Lord may be said to have exemplified these two aspects of human life in the two parts of His life—the consecrated common life in His years at Nazareth; the unearthly calling of the Kingdom of Heaven in His ministry, with its universal love and helpfulness, its service of the world and its sacrifice. No doubt, in the home and in the earthly calling He exercised in perfection the whole of Divine love; still, His work was not complete till

love brought Him forth to lay down His life for the world. And we notice two or three incidents which mark, as it were, the transition from the one part of our Lord's exemplary life to the other. One of these is the incident of the text. Another is the occasion when His friends sought to lay hold of Him, and His mother and His brethren came to withdraw Him again to that quiet home in which He had lived so happy and so perfect a life; and He said it could not be, but, looking round on the circle of His disciples, declared, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother,"—thus forming new relationships for a new work and "forsaking an earthly for an heavenly home." This change, again, appeared in His setting aside the

suggestion of His mother at the wedding in Cana—when, although there is no real ground for the impression of harshness conveyed by our English form of His words, He yet distinctly showed that He had now entered on a new and higher work, in which her wish could no longer be law; for the new calling does at times, and apparently, suspend the old obligations.

I shall not, however, dwell on any of these suggestive incidents: and I have selected one of them as my text simply in order to start from the example of Christ, and have His authority for what I say. Let me in the first place add a few words more upon the Christian consecration of common life, and then go on to speak of the calling to a higher service.

## II

There is a wonderful possibility of consecration in common life ; and the example of our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed it to us. Perhaps some of us are under the idea that the highest possible Christian life could not be lived in the circumstances in which we are placed. Perhaps we are discontented with our position, and we would say—if we had great influence or great abilities, we should serve God ; if we were rich and prosperous, we could be happy and good Christians ; or if we could be missionaries to the heathen, we should live a “life of service.” Or perhaps we have special difficulties—temptations, companions, burdens ; and we wish it were as easy for us as it is for the minister to be witnesses for Christ. Well, it ought to

inspire us to think that it was in a position like our own that the perfect life was lived. Jesus was as entirely well-pleasing to God in the home and in the village as He was when preaching to the multitude or suffering for His great mission. And He had His temptations: He endured the contradiction of sinners; He was tempted in all points; He must have known what it was to have hindrances put in His way, and must have experienced all those trials and difficulties, in earthly life and a sinful world, which we think make it impossible to do the right.

Again, some of us are making little of our present life because we have never realised how much may be made of it. We think we must wait for heaven to be rid of sin, and meanwhile are quite content to be very faulty, very selfish, very worldly.

Brethren, it is not necessary. We are called to be like Christ. We know what He was, and we can imagine something of what His life must have been, in the home, in the midst of daily toil, and in the life of the little town. When we think of Him in His home, how plainly we begin to see our own home-life, with all its undutifulness, or selfishness, or faults of temper. When we think of the life He lived in a lot humble as our own, how we are ashamed of our ambition, and discontent, and discouragement. We remember how we have felt towards our neighbours, how we have spoken of them, and then think what a neighbour Christ must have been.

Christ's life reveals the possibilities of our common human lot. And a little reflection might show us why there is so much in our life. For one thing, God

has given it to us. The Christian morality—of a consecrated common life—is the morality of faith in God. Many moral teachers have taught that to reach the highest life we must forsake the common ways of men. This asceticism, as it is called, prompted the Buddhist renunciation; it lies below the whole system of monkish piety; but it is always reappearing, and it appears in many present-day notions about true unworldliness. Such views of the highest life lack faith in God. God has given us this common earthly life to live, and we must believe that God's highest purposes concerning us can be fulfilled in it; and so they can.

The reason of this great opportunity of pleasing God and this great possibility of consecration in common, everyday life lies in a deep spiritual principle which is at the

very bottom of Christianity. That principle is that the true aim of life is character. What a man is worth to God depends not on what he does, but on what he is—not on his doing anything remarkable in itself, or that will bulk largely in the eyes of men, but on his *being* something, being great, being good, being Christ-like. And the point is that your home-life and your daily work bring you opportunities of exercising the very highest spiritual qualities—the height of unselfishness, the height of true nobility, all obedience and faith, all love and patience; and they contain a discipline and schooling for character: so that, whether over great things or small, you may be faithful, and being faithful may please God and obtain the great reward; and in connection with the humblest matters and in the obscurest sphere you may be great, and do



more in the sight of God and come nearer the end of life than those who seem to perform great services and produce what men call great results.

Finally, the law of character, the nature of goodness, being what it is, this great object may be most fully realised in the humble sphere of ordinary domestic and social life. For the true nature of goodness is love; and love will certainly show itself first to those who are nearest you. Love must show itself there, or it is not love. A man may profess great interest in the cause of Christ at large: he may preach, he may do evangelistic work; but if he does not show a loving spirit to his family, to his servants, to his fellow-Christians, he does not know much about Christianity. It is so much easier to preach and profess than just to be always considerate, always

mindful of the interest of others ! But this is what we must ask Christ to make us. It is in our daily dealings and common relationships that the spirit of Christ-like love is so much required ; and it is in these things that it can be exercised in the highest degree ; and this will be the consecration of common life, in the fulfilment of God's highest purposes for men, and the production through Christ's power of a character pleasing in God's sight.

### III

But, in the second place, the revelation Christ has made of the possibilities of human life, and of the laws which ought to govern it, addresses to us all a higher calling still. While it has heightened the obligation of our common duties and responsibilities to those nearest to us, it has

also greatly widened the circle of those to whom we have duties and responsibilities. The love which Christ has made the law of life is a love universal, all-embracing ; it is love towards those to whom we have no natural ties and no secular relationship, love towards our enemies, love towards those who (as men say) are nothing to us ; it is simply love to men. Christ has revealed God's interest in all men and in every man ; and we are to imitate and to share God's love (for we are to be like Him), and under this universal Fatherhood to enter into the brotherhood of men. The Christian morality, the Christian ideal for men in the restored image of God, is Love—Love active, positive, seeking to do good, longing to bless, restless till it has made others happy. Many people seem to think that the function of religion in life is to bring in

certain limits, and that is all ; that morality consists of certain negative restrictions, such as the prohibition of dishonesty, or violent dealing, or gross self-indulgence ; but that if a man avoids these, he is at liberty to make his own advancement, his own comfort, or the welfare of his home and comfort of his family, his object in life. This is the opposite of the Christian view, which is that a man is called first of all to a great service—to love all men, to labour in a cause, to seek the ends of God. He is to provide for himself, and to care for his own interests, but only that he may fit himself and maintain himself for the true object of life. That comes first. And accordingly you commit sin, you fail of the true end and the true standard in life, not only when you seek your own dishonestly, but when you seek your own for your own sake at all ; it

is sinful self-indulgence, not only when you go into excesses in forbidden pleasure, but when you come short in love, and fail in helpfulness and service to God and the brethren. It was for failure in active service, for sins of omission, that Christ saw men condemned in His anticipation of the last Judgment. He called men to service, He commanded them to love ; He said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Now in such a life, as I have said, we have His own example. He was one who loved His country, and suffered in its wrongs. He could not see others' suffering and others' sin and remain unmoved. These things were a call to Him to go out of His way to help them. He left His quiet home and His innocent and

lawful occupations—for the spiritual consecration of the Baptism, for the conflict in the Wilderness, for the service of men in their sufferings and sins—to be the Friend and Lover of mankind, and at last lay down His life for their cause. And we are called to follow Him: we may not be called to the same sufferings; we are called to the same love, to the same view of life as the service of a great end beyond ourselves in the good of men and the will of God. Thus He called His first disciples. At first, after He made friends with them by the Jordan, they seem to have remained in their homes and at their common work; some of them, very likely, were the friends of His youth, and for a time He let them live as He also had lived. But when the great work began, He said, “Follow Me,”

and they left their nets and followed Him. It was the higher calling which in one form or other, amid the needs and sins and sorrows of this world, God sends to every man, to love and serve his brethren. It had come to Him: He "must be about His Father's business"; and that was what made Him say to His anxious mother, "What have I to do with thee?" And the call came to them, and they left all and followed Him. Well, this service did mean the breaking off of old relationships, the breaking in upon old ways of life, the breaking up of happy homes. Those who are joined by the ties of nature or of circumstance may also be united in spirit and in destiny through a united service of the great cause; but if they are not, the higher claim must prevail. "If any man

come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division." "The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother." And there are occasions when even duties sacred in themselves, which at any other time would be binding, are set aside by the more imperative obligations of the Kingdom of Heaven: when Jesus was hastening to the end at Jerusalem, and sending His messengers before His face for a last solemn proclamation and final opportunity to men, when all were needed and the business of the Kingdom



required haste, He said to one, "Follow Me; but he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." It is true that in a new life new relationships are formed: Christ felt this Himself, saying, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother"; and He invited His disciples to feel the same—"One is your Master," he said, "and all ye are brethren." We have a citizenship in Heaven, said the Apostle of the new life; and we do find in it new companions and new interests, if the exigencies of our warfare compel us to break with many of the old. And above all we are "in our Father's house," at home with Him in life. Still, we doubtless find it, as the

first disciples found it, a real warfare and a difficult service. They found in it growing responsibilities, growing demands, growing dangers. At first, they dwelt with the Master at Capernaum and shared His labours in preaching and in healing; by-and-by they had to follow Him to Jerusalem on that lonely journey, when villages refused Him, and He "had not where to lay His head"; it was then that He began to say, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me"; and at last they did share something of the shame and peril of His Cross. This is our service—the fellowship of His sufferings; we live in the same world, for the same ends; and if we are to live the life for others that Jesus lived, we shall also know something of that "bear-

ing about in our body His dying” of which St. Paul spoke, and of which he was himself so conspicuous an example—“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh”; but the fruit of the sacrifice would be found, he said, in the good of those on whose behalf it was made—“All things are for your sakes; . . . death worketh in us, but life in you.”

Such is the higher calling of the Christian. It seems hard and austere. And yet it is just by calling men to this higher service that Christianity is to bring about the happiness of the world. Let me put the

matter strongly in this light to those who are doing nothing positive and active for the Kingdom of Heaven, and who have never yet felt their religion calling them to the service of a public cause. You try to do your duty, you say ; you are diligent and honest in your daily calling, and if others would just be the same things would go smoothly enough. But there is the difficulty ! You find every day the inconvenience, the discomfort of having to do with people who are dishonest, and idle, and careless, and self-indulgent ; or you see the unhappiness caused in human life by human sin. Well, the work in which we ask you to join is the removal of these evils ; the Kingdom of Heaven is to make men fair, and true, and straight, and generally satisfactory ; Christ is to make the world happy by making it good. Again, you try to

make your own home peaceful, and comfortable, and happy ; you have a high appreciation of the value of a happy home. But do you not see how sin is desolating the homes of men ? Do you not realise that sin is the chief enemy of the happiness of your own home—selfishness, temper, self-indulgence ? And will you not take to your heart the great family of mankind, and make its cause your own, and grieve over its miseries, and labour to put them away ? That is the Christian's calling.

#### IV

It is through this calling to a universal brotherhood and a public spirit that Christianity makes good citizens. There are a hundred schemes on foot for social reconstruction and regeneration—many of them noble and promising, and forming ideals

at which we ought steadily to aim ; but the objection to all such schemes is that they do not allow for human selfishness, for the moral imperfection of the men by whom they are to be worked ; and as long as men are greedy and self-seeking, so long will the strong crush the weak ; as long as men are intemperate and improvident, you cannot ameliorate their condition. But Christianity strikes at this crucial point of the individual will : it aims at making good *citizens* ; the social question will be solved when men love one another. Meanwhile, what do we need more than a disinterested, a truly public spirit in public life ? We want the masses of men who rule themselves to vote not for class interests, but for public good : there is the golden rule of the Christian voter. We want men of honour, men of principle, men

of patriotic zeal in positions of public trust. We want capable men to give their time and sacrifice their private interests for all that concerns the common good. We want men who know where the highest interests of their fellow-citizens lie, and that it is in purity, in temperance, in Christian living—men who will be reformers in the highest sense of removing everything in the political state of the people which hinders or endangers their moral well-being.

We all have more or less to do with these matters. But the public cause of mankind demands something of us all, and something which we are all able to render. We can all do something to alleviate human suffering; we can all join to stand against sin. As many as know Christ can point other eyes to Him, Who is the Saviour from sin and gives peace in

sorrow and through Whose power the world and every man can have a happy future. I call this work in a public cause : it is the deepest interest of all mankind. Such work need not always be public in the sense of outward publicity. Individuals may do a very great deal for the good of many without attracting much attention : although as soon as a number of people are organised for a common good purpose, a certain measure of publicity is unavoidable. Some of us, in connection with every good object, must bear the burden of publicity ; and I think it is a burden which ought to be divided. The fact that you do not like publicity is no reason why you should not have to take it upon you. We all shrink from publicity ; it means work, it means trouble, it means responsibility ; but the good work needs to be done and



needs to be cared for, and there is often as much selfishness as modesty in our shrinking from publicity in connection with it. However, if you are doing quietly as much as you can, and believe upon your conscience that you are not needed to be more prominent (observe, not “do not like to be more prominent,” but “are not needed”)—if you are sure of this, I say no more. All I am insisting on, as being a part of every Christian’s calling, is the doing something for others, outside ourselves, and outside the necessary round of secular duty.

For the Christian’s calling will not be satisfied with less. “I must be about My Father’s business.” Leave all, and “follow Me.” It is not enough that you should be pursuing an earthly calling diligently and honestly; the question is, What is your

object in life? It is not enough that a Christian should try to do no harm; he is called to do good, to love his brethren and do them good. You keep the commandments in your way; but are you ready to sell all that you have and follow Christ? Have you any gift to give to Christ, any free and unrequited service to render Him? You profess to obey God; but He requires of you not only to keep His outward precepts, but to serve His ends in life. You love Christ; He bids you love His brethren and be their servant. You hope for salvation; this new life, this is salvation, this service, this likeness to Christ.

## V

But I should suppose that there are many of you who are certainly not merely selfish, but yet have never realised your public

calling as Christians. Your object in life is not your own welfare: it would be nearer the truth to say it is the welfare of those depending on you. Or your life is altogether devoted to the care of a family, and you have no time to spare for wider interests: the Church, the State, the public good, the advancement of the kingdom of God—all these you leave to others.

Now, what I have to say about that is—that there are some of you who can give little active help to any public cause, and yet even you ought to give more of your mind, more of your interest to such things than you do; for your own sake, and for the sake of your prayers, you should always be full of the larger aspects of Christ's kingdom and the needs of the public good. But further, there are many who are

deceiving themselves, and might do more if they would.

“If,” says a modern moralist, “there have been some who to party gave up what was meant for mankind, there have certainly been others who to family gave up what was meant for mankind or for their country.” There is a truth here, though it requires to be carefully guarded. There is a danger of an engrossment in family interests which is only a slightly extended selfishness. The French say the good is the enemy of the best; and the love of home is truly a good thing—the home-life ought to be a training in all dutifulness and unselfishness; yet sometimes the family spirit is the enemy of public spirit. For example, a man may entertain worldly ambitions for his family which he never felt for himself; and these ambitions leave him

no time nor means for helping the good cause. He might have adequately provided for his children, and still kept his hands and his heart free ; but for the sake of the luxury and the worldly advancement he desires for them, he becomes a slave to business, and a lover of money, and is able to do little and to care little for the general good or the cause of Christ. If, for example, he were to give more largely to missions, his family would feel the sacrifice ; but, I ask, why should they not ? Would it not be good for them that they should ? Or again, those who have the daily care of households are apt to lose sight of greater interests. How many are there who are losing their souls, not in worldly ambition, nor in giddy pleasure, but in a petty round of domestic trifles ? Do not misunderstand me : you have your

duties in these things, sacred and indispensable duties, and, as I have already said, a great and glorious opportunity of Christ-like living. But keep worldly things in their place, hold them with a loose hand; and take care that there is something more in your lives than mere material cares, and little rivalries, and paltry social ambitions; I say, let there be something more—some wide interest, some Christian sympathy, some public enthusiasm. Even those who have souls far above the level I have described, and are giving themselves with utter unselfishness and patient zeal to seek the highest well-being of their children, finding in their daily lives an unrivalled missionary opportunity and the need of the very highest consecration and the utmost grace of God—even they ought for their own sake and their children's sake to look beyond.

Have you, do you think, a complete Christian life, with so little interest in the great cause of all mankind for which Christ died and all the saints have laboured, with no personal share in the work of it, and so few prayers for it from your heart? And then, are you not to bring up your children to care about that great public cause, and in its service to live indeed and make the most of life? How can they learn to love Christ's cause, Christ's Church, or Christ's work, unless you by active labours and practical sacrifices are showing them the way?

Your homes are happy, yours are peaceful and pure. But look around you. Think of other homes, not pure, not peaceful, not happy; and hear Christ's call to help Him in the salvation of the world from misery and sin.

You will have to give up your comfortable ways, to curtail your favourite occupations. Nay, even what would be sacred duties, were there no need of Christ's service, become obstacles and stumbling-blocks. We might all keep to ourselves, to our innocent amusements, to our domestic duties, were there no evil in the world to fight against, no wrongs to right, no souls to save. But as it is, we dare not. You dare not even indulge your natural reserve, your shrinking from prominence, your dislike of criticism, your feeling of inability. We *are* unfit, we *are* unable; but we can have our hearts filled with love, and we can point to Christ Who is almighty to save. And what could be more immoral than to allow our superfine feeling, our sensitive self-love, to hinder us from bringing a holier influence round souls in peril, or holding out to those



that are ready to perish a brother's or sister's helping hand?

You will not be disappointed in the more active and more helpful life to which I invite you. You will find new interests springing up in it; you will find great joy in it; and amid so much that is unsatisfying and disappointing in life, a source of deep and lasting satisfaction. It will always be rest to follow Christ: it will always be peace to help others. And all the time you will be truly in your Father's house, at home with God, a true child of your Father in Heaven, Who loves all, and Who in His Son Jesus Christ left His home to save the lost.



#### IV. The Word made Flesh



## THE WORD MADE FLESH

CAMBRIDGE, DECEMBER 9TH, 1894

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*—JOHN i. 14.

CHRISTIANITY is essentially a new thought of God. It is true that this thought of God leads directly to other thoughts, distinctively Christian, about the world and man and human life. It is also true that the Christian revelation of God has a direct bearing upon practical life and conduct—a practical influence on human life, penetrating and transforming it. But the

fundamental thought is a view of God's being and character—God made known, God doing something and revealing Himself in the act. And the manifestation is given, the thought of God supplied, in the life and character of the Man Jesus Christ.

[ The Incarnation, ~~accordingly~~, is the centre of Christian belief and the foundation of Christian life. If we wish to know what God is, and what is His mind towards ourselves, we look to Christ as He was on earth. And again Christianity as a mode of human life, and as that life's redemption, springs from what in Christ God has been and God has done: the foundation of Christianity is that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."

[ It follows from this that any attempt

to express the Incarnation must be hopelessly inadequate. To understand the Incarnation would be to understand the whole truth of God and man. To describe the effect of the Incarnation would be to anticipate the whole history of human redemption. In the same way, to establish the truth of the Incarnation would be to establish in broad outline the whole of Christian theology. It will be understood, then, that it cannot be my intention either to prove that "God was in Christ," or to show all that these words mean. All I shall attempt will be to indicate in a simple and rough way how it is held that "God was in Christ" and "the World was made flesh," and how we believe a human life could contain "the whole fulness of the Godhead in bodily wise."

Now, the Christian doctrines rest on the Christian facts; and, according to a saying of Canon Scott Holland, "the creeds are simply a record that certain questions have been asked." What, then, were the facts that Christian thought had to start from in Christ?

There was, first, the plain historical fact of Christ's humanity. He had been among men, a man subject to the conditions of human life and not exempt from death. Men's eyes had seen, their hands had handled Him. He was a man.

On the other hand, there was His divinity, which they believed in firmly, even before His relation to the Divine nature or the constitution of His Person had been formally defined in their thoughts. Nowhere but in Christ did



they seek the knowledge of God; and no attributes were too high to be ascribed to the Saviour of the World.

These facts of course raised a question. The question was, how to think of a Christ both human and Divine; and to this the Church replied by speaking of two Natures in one Person. It was sought to preserve by this formula the real oneness of God and man in Christ, since if this truth were lost, the distinctive meaning of Christianity would have disappeared; because if Christ were less than God, then we could no longer be sure in Him of God's love or of eternal salvation; and if He were other than man, we should no longer have in Him an act of God in human history or a consecration of human life.

But "Nature" and "Person" are, of

course, arbitrary words ; and these words, as used to shadow forth the Christian verities, are to be understood in a sense appropriate to the realities to which they are applied.

A Divine humanity, let us remember, was a new fact in human history and made a new demand upon human speech ; and Christ's Divine nature and human nature are simply the true humanity and true divinity which He possessed without losing the unity of a single consciousness and a single personality. They are not two beings ; and the object of the Church's doctrine was to maintain, along with the union of God and man in Christ, His real and actual personality, so that the union of God and man should be understood to be a thing real, possible, and actually accomplished.

Various explanations of Christ's person-

ality have been given, let us remember, besides that of the oneness in Him of God and man. It has been thought impossible that Godhead and manhood should be thus identified with one another ; and explanations have been offered which are supposed to be simpler and more natural. Some of these were held by schools and parties in other days, and now only survive as tendencies and dispositions of thought. Others are living still. It has been thought simpler, for example, to say that Christ is not both human and Divine, and that He is either one or the other.

With the Humanitarian view of Christ, which would regard Him as a mere man, we are of course familiar. It has existed from the very first ; and but for this fact it would be regarded as a thing outside the circle of faith, and as amounting to unbelief.

It must be admitted that there are those whose heart's faith in Jesus is higher than their theories and beliefs about Him, who misunderstand the formulæ of the Trinity and Christ's Person, because they take them in their verbal rather than their actual meaning, and who really consent to the spirit of Christian doctrine, though they stumble at the letter. At the same time, to adore Christ in the heart, and yet to hold poor and unworthy thoughts of Him is always an inconsistency and always a moral loss; and to say that God is not in Christ is to overthrow the very foundation of Christian life. Not as a judgment of men, but in strict logic, this view of Christ must be regarded as an unbelief in a vital matter.

Then there is the other way of simplifying the problem of Divine humanity. It is

instructive to remember that in other times men have found it simplest to regard Christ as a Being purely Divine. In days when belief in the supernatural world was easier than it is now, men thought of Christ as of a purely spiritual and Divine Being ; and His humanity was supposed to be a mere appearance, a mask, a phantom ; and this is significant as an indication of the reality of the problem that the Church has had to face. This view no longer exists as a theory definitely held ; and yet there has been in men's thoughts of Christ, and there still is, a constant tendency towards this error. Earnest belief in Christ's Divinity has a difficulty in allowing His real humanity. The idea, for example, of Christ's growing, as a man, in wisdom as well as in stature, is repugnant to some minds ; and, despite the teaching of Scripture, there are

those who refuse to think of His being subject to any ordinary human limitations, whether of power or of knowledge. This idea of Christ, too common among believers in His Divinity, finds expression in Shelley's fine but misleading figure—

A mortal shape to Him was as the vapours dim,  
Which the orient planet animates with light.

The same poet makes Him "tread the thorns of death and shame, like a triumphal path, of which He never truly felt the sharpness."

One of our hymns falls into this heresy when it speaks of the "seeming infant of a day." This is exactly to reduce His humanity to a mere appearance. He was not the "seeming infant," but the "real infant of a day."

I have myself met people to whom

Christ's patience and suffering, for example, could offer no consolation, because they said, "He was God all the time, and it was easy for Him." This is a very unfortunate result of false teaching. No doubt His oneness with His Father was His comfort and support; but we ourselves are to find peace in just the same spirit of sonship; and meanwhile His human experiences were real and His sufferings real. So much for those who have said that Christ must be either one or the other, either human or Divine.

If, however, men wished to hold both the Divinity and the humanity, and yet hesitated to admit the oneness of man and God, there were still two courses open to them. One was to suppose that the Divine and human lives of Christ, while both real, were somehow separate from one another

and independent. The other was to blend them together, by obliterating the attributes of both, so that the result of the union is not a Divine humanity, but a new sort of being—a *tertium quid*—Divine and human in a sense without being really either. Neither of these is what we need ; and very early the idea was suggested of two separate lives, the Divine and the human, running as it were parallel and simultaneous with one another. The theory took shape in this way, that Christ was a mere man, but that at some point in His life—for example, His baptism—a Divine Being descended on Him. This view first appeared in a form that denied Christ's Divinity. It was not God Who was in Christ, but a lower divinity or angelic Being ; and even this Being rested on Him during a part only of His earthly life.



Afterwards a similar idea was revived in a higher form ; and it is still held by some ancient Churches that the Divine and human natures existed separately throughout Christ's life, and both were real, but the Divine could not enter into the human, nor the human into the Divine. It was against this that the Church affirmed the doctrine of the One Person.

Now there is not perhaps much danger of our adopting this theory. A personality, a consciousness, that is divided, is to modern ideas inconceivable ; and besides, the idea is contrary to all we read of Jesus in the Gospel history, where He appears as a single real Person, with one human and Divine life, and one set of thoughts ; and yet there is still once more a tendency, even in orthodox circles, thus to divide and separate the human and the Divine. But if

the Divine life of Jesus was a second life above and separate from the human, then neither would human life really be consecrated by the Incarnation, nor would God really be manifested in Christ.

[ We are apt to think of humanity and Divinity as opposed to one another, as contradictory, and exclusive one of the other. The great effect of the Incarnation is to correct these ideas of humanity and of Divinity.

( It was the same doubt whether real humanity and real Divinity can be one, which carried others to the opposite extreme of obliterating the characteristics of both in order to secure a unity in Christ's Person. The watchword of this party in the ancient Church was "One Person, One Nature." We are still in danger of some such easy and shallow thought of Christ's

Divinity and humanity—as if His humanity were not quite human, nor His Divinity quite Divine, so that He becomes neither the one nor the other; and what the orthodox Church felt when it said “One Person, two real Natures,” was that it was in danger of losing both its Divine Saviour and its human-hearted God.

The last great struggle that took place within the Church upon the subject raged round the question of the reality and completeness of the Divine and the human. Do I make myself clear? The supposition was that Divinity and humanity stood opposed to each other, and that a Divine humanity could be made more possible by reducing, by paring down, the one or the other, or both. A Moderate School proposed to reduce both, a little, blending two natures in one; others, holding to

the Divinity, reduced and mutilated the humanity, to fit it, as it was supposed, for union with the Divine. So some imagined a humanity without the rational soul : body and animal life were there ; but the Divine nature took the place of the higher faculties of the mind. Others proposed to depreciate the humanity of Christ's will, thinking that would simplify the matter.

We should probably be disposed to stand for Christ's full humanity. The opposite alternative is one which is more attractive and more dangerous for us. That alternative was to lower, and in lowering practically to deny, His divinity ; and so the last enemy that the orthodox doctrine had to meet was Arianism ; a theory something like that which we call Unitarianism, in its higher form, which made of Christ a Being above men, but lower than God, and

therefore, it was supposed, the better fitted to be manifested in the flesh. The doctrine of an intermediate Being, characteristic of the earlier forms of Arianism, really sacrificed Christ's humanity as well as His Divinity; but this was rectified by the later Unitarians, who conceived Christ as a real man certainly, while not Divine in any sense in which divinity is not fully shared by all men; and this accordingly is the only modern alternative to a belief in a Divine humanity—this purely naturalistic and humanitarian view of Christ. The intermediate positions are completely abandoned as quite out of keeping with modern ways of thought; and their influence remains only in the form of misunderstandings or confusions of the true doctrine. No one now believes in a Christ Divine without being human. We cannot

conceive the historical humanity of Jesus a shadow, when we only know Christ through His human life; and in the same way we cannot imagine that the Divinity in Him superseded human thought and human will, when in His human life we see the evidences of reason and purpose. As for an intermediate Being, neither truly human nor truly Divine, we can form no conception of it. Nor can we believe in a Divine Christ separate and apart from the human Christ; for the human Christ is the Christ we know, and if His Divinity were not actually manifest in this humanity, we should have no evidence of existence and no reason for believing in it at all.

That Christ was human we know. It is an idea which we can conceive that He was no more—though to say so is to ignore the witness of His life, and to

contradict the experience of ten thousand hearts.

We can also believe what the Gospel proclaims—that the Living God can manifest Himself in the human life that He has made, and that a human real life can be the vehicle and realisation of the Divine. But between these two beliefs no other alternative remains. Of a Divine Christ, of a Christ more than human, no conception remains possible at all, except that of a real Divine humanity. For every other fancied explanation of Christ's Person is foreign to our modes of thought, and has been relegated to the limbo of forgotten superstition.

I shall now mention, and that is all I shall do further, three great truths or principles which prepare our minds to believe in a divine humanity; principles

which, on the one hand, are the theological basis of the doctrine of Incarnation and the conditions of its possibility, and of which, on the other, the Incarnation is the crowning illustration and example.

In the first place, there is the truth of the Divine immanence in the world. God has not made the world and left it to itself. "In Him all things live and move and have their being." He dwells in it, and sustains it. The life which ever flows forth in it has Him for its continual source; and all its various existences and events exist and occur in Him and through Him. From Him perpetually they come; and He maintains their being and their laws. As Mr. Illingworth has said, "The physical immanence of God in His creation can hardly be overstated, as long as His moral transcendency of it is also kept in view."



The bearing of this on the Incarnation is evident. The idea of God dwelling in flesh is a very difficult one: the Incarnation remains a great mystery. But, after all, the whole relationship of God to this world is the mystery of mysteries. It is difficult to think of divinity—that is, of infinity—being confined within the limits of a finite nature and an earthly life; but that is the very difficulty which is involved in the idea of God indwelling in the world, of infinite power subordinated to work among finite things, and eternal purposes fulfilling themselves in time. It is the same difficulty, and not really greater in the one case than in the other. And the fact is that the humanitarian idea of Christ is too simple. Its simplicity is its condemnation. The very idea that a world of finite things exists at all implies

the possibility of the infinite being in the finite, and of earthly things, every one of them, having a double nature—the earthly and the Divine.

So, secondly, our belief in the Incarnation rests on our belief in a Divine Spirit at work in human life. Let ~~me~~ us rather say the fact of the Incarnation is conditioned by this great reality, and it is the crowning instance of God's presence in human life. Man was made, as we believe, in the image of God; and God's Spirit has never ceased to strive with man. The old theology drew a valid distinction between the image and the likeness of God: likeness to God, man lost through sin; but he remained a being in God's image. Here we see the possibility of the Incarnation. Human nature is capable of a perfect fellowship with

God, and a perfect embodiment of His character; and the relation of the Son to the Father can hardly be otherwise conceived than as a perfect fellowship and a perfect identity of mind and will. And not only is human nature, as it is meant to be, capable of oneness with the Divine; but that is its intended destiny. God's Spirit is given in measure to man. Shall It not at last be given without measure? The work of the Redeeming Spirit has ever been to draw men towards fellowship with God and likeness to Christ; nay, more, to a participation of the Divine nature. Should not the process have its perfection and consummation in a Divine humanity?

When one says the Incarnation is the crown and goal of evolution, that does not mean that nature has produced a Christ, but that evolution is the work of

the Spirit of God, and Christ God's Son. It is this which has led many orthodox theological thinkers to the suggestive speculation that, although to a sinful world God's Incarnate Son must be a Saviour from sin, the Incarnation was the original goal of creation: that is to say, if we may conceive that there had not been a "fall," God's purpose in humanity would still have been consummated by Incarnation. This much, at least, is clear, that by God's manifestation in the flesh we have obtained an impression of God's love, and our life has received a consecration which, apart from it, we could not have known; and it is hardly to be imagined that we owe all this to sin. Did God intend something less for humanity as He originally designed it? It has been said, "Instead of being surprised to

find the Word made flesh, we must rather have been surprised had it not been so; and instead of turning to the fall for an explanation and a cause of the great mystery, we may wonder at the impartial mercy which holds on its course in spite of man's rebellion."

Here once more on this view of human life we see that the error of Unitarianism is its too great simplicity. Its plainness, clearness, and reasonableness are gained by ignoring this Divine element in human life. Its simplicity is simplicity that leaves out God. There is no such thing as a mere humanity; and it is not a thing strange or unnatural that God was manifested in the flesh; for, asks one of the Fathers, "If the Word of God is in the world as in a body, what is there strange in affirming that He also

entered into men? Where is the incredibility, if, being in men, He reveals Himself among them? It is no strange thing if the Word Who orders all things, and gives life to all things, and Who willed a revelation to come through men, has used a human body for the manifesting of the truth, and making known of the Father."

7 The third truth which makes the Incarnation possible, and prepares us to believe in it, is the moral nature of God's true greatness. God is power. God is—what is a special form of power—knowledge. But more essentially God is love. Holiness, goodness, moral qualities, generally, are not only the greatest things in God; but, as we must remember, they are the essence of Divinity. If there was anything that Christ came to teach us, it was to establish

moral qualities above physical or intellectual, character above everything else, love above power; and if there is anything the Incarnation makes manifest, it is that where holiness and goodness are, there is Divinity. "Where love is, God is."

In this light we may begin to understand how God was manifest in the flesh. The old Schoolmen used to debate whether God, if it pleased Him, could have manifested Himself in a lower form of nature, in a stone or in a vegetable, as they supposed absurdly enough. The question needs only to be asked to be answered. What is the reason why no such lower form of nature could manifest God? Many of the forces of nature could manifest, in a far higher degree than man, God's power; but only in a human life, among all earthly things, could moral qualities and moral purposes

be manifested ; only spirit could reveal spirit ; only character could declare character ; only love could truly speak of love. In a character and a love like Christ's God was revealed. When we ask whether God could be manifested in human life, let us ask instead, can love be manifested in a human life ? can purity, can holiness, can ~~a~~ a will and purpose to save and bless ? We see here the true direction in which to look for proofs of Christ's Divinity. Wherein, according to our text, did the character of Christ consist, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" ? Not in omnipotence. Not in omniscience. But in "grace and truth." Purity, such as we believe to be in God, a love which is simply the Divinest thing that earth has ever seen—these are what we have beheld in Christ ; and if you still press the question about His



nature, whether, for all His goodness and all His love, His “nature” was really Divine? I reply by asking, What were the contents of His mind, what the contents of His will? Were they not simply the thoughts, the purposes of God? The Kingdom of God was the end for which Christ lived: He lived only for the ends of God. God’s life was His life; and so His nature was one with God’s; for the nature of a moral being is His character and His will.

At the same time this view of what is essential in divinity allows us also to believe in the reality of Christ’s human nature. It is, of course, difficult to understand—we never shall understand—how the possession of a disposition and a will at one with God’s should affect a human nature in respect alike of power and knowledge; but the

difficulty need not be made insoluble by a conception of Christ's Divinity which would leave Him neither human experience, nor human uncertainty, nor human anxiety, nor human sorrow, neither difficulty nor need, neither past nor present nor future, nor human life at all. It will help us to remember that it is not omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience that make Divinity, but "grace and truth." "It was," says Canon Mason, "we may reverently say, the only way to show us the Father. Men are too ready to look upon God as crushing force and cold omniscience. Had Christ appeared on earth with all His splendours about Him, He would have perpetuated our mistake; . . . and when Christ emptied Himself of the exercise of omnipotence and infinite knowledge, He did not empty Himself of love. He

divested Himself only of that which would have dazzled and distracted us, in order that we might see His love more perfectly."

The practical consequences of the truth of the Incarnation may be said to be twofold. In the first place, it is the crowning proof of the reality of a Divine activity in human life. God has done something for human life and for all of us. He has done much, and in many ways ; but in Christ He has done all we know. He has revealed Himself, and henceforth we know Him and have seen Him. We know His will ; we know what we ought to be ; and we know a heavenly Friend Who will help us to be it. He has fought for us, in the flesh, the battle against sin ; by righteousness and love He has condemned in the flesh both sin and selfishness ; and under the inspiration and

conviction of that righteousness, the constraint and appeal of that love, the righteousness of God is to be fulfilled in us. That He has done—God has done—for us ; and it is not all an old story. God is still the same God as He was in Christ, a permanent influence, and a perpetual inspiration calling us, although we are human, to a life like His own—His own very life.

For the second practical consequence of the Incarnation is that human life may be a Divine life. There are many difficulties about the consecration of common life ; but we are to remember that our common life has been Divine. We are on earth ; but Christ on earth was in the Father ; and Heaven may have begun for any of us also if we wish. We have common things to handle, and homely duties to perform ;

yet in them all we may be, like Christ, the children of God, and instruments of His will. Organs of His spirit we may be the while and images of Him. We have the temptations of the flesh. Christ witnesses that our bodies may be the temples of the Holy Ghost.

It is a great possibility. It is a great guide to teach us at what to aim in life. We are not to leave the earth, but to hallow it; not to shirk our life, but to live it, and to aim, for ourselves and others, at a realised likeness to God—at Christian homes, at a Christian society, at a redeemed humanity.

The source and fountain of such a life is Christ. When shall we fathom the mystery of that kind heart, so simple, so homely, so natural, so near, so real, so dear; a son to His mother, a friend to His friends, and

able to make every one feel that He was a brother: yet God among men, God with men—expressing in that goodness the Divine Holiness and in that love the Eternal Mercy?

## V. Atonement





## ATONEMENT

*To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.—2 CORINTHIANS v. 19.*

WHEN we have said Atonement we have really said reconciliation. The word in English, says Professor Skeat, is “due to the frequent use of the phrase ‘at one’ for ‘reconciled’ in Middle English.”

A reconciler was an at-one-maker. Reconciliation was at-onement. Atone-ment, then, is the “onement” of those who have been in any way apart. The English word of our text, “reconciling,” lays stress

on the idea of change—change of relationship from enmity to friendship, from separation to oneness ; but the end in view is oneness, at-one-ment ; and God in reconciling is an at-one-maker of the world and Himself. Now, of course, the word is almost confined, in its use, to what Christ has done to bring the world and God to one ; and in particular it is always taken to refer to His sufferings for that object. It is in this sense that I speak of Atonement this morning. I ask you to look at Christ's work particularly as the setting of God and man at one, and at the place which His sufferings and His death hold in his task of reconciliation. The problem is to see the necessity of Christ and of His death for reconciliation or atonement between God and man. The reason or necessity is what we wish to see—the connection

between Christ and this Atonement or reconciliation. It is true that we can believe in such a connection without understanding it—that we can hold, as it is said, the fact of Christ's Atonement without having a theory of it. It is quite evident that the belief in the fact of Atonement through Christ is independent of any particular theory of it, from the fact that different people who undoubtedly have believed in the Atonement have formed such very different theories about it; and this being so, it is at least possible to hold to the fact without seeking to theorise about it. You may feel simply that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour Who certainly has done and will do all you need, though you will never be able to understand all He does. You may feel more definitely, though still vaguely, that Christ stands somehow

between you and God—able somehow to join you, sure somehow by what He is and by what He has done to bring you to God and Heaven. Such vague thoughts are certainly possible; but it is a question whether they are desirable. At least for the satisfaction of our minds it is natural that we should seek to understand somewhat more clearly the connection between Christ and our salvation generally, and in particular between Christ and our reconciliation to God. And as I believe such clearness and knowledge will bring the great reality of Christ and of the Gospel home with fresh power to our hearts, therefore it must be desirable for a full, a strong, healthy and complete spiritual life, that we should have them. I think it is necessary that we should have them. My purpose at present, then, is simply to

illustrate the necessity of Christ for our reconciliation—of Christ and His life and in particular His death for our Atonement with God. To try to understand this necessity will be to think of the reason of Atonement.

Now, it will be obvious to you that we cannot go very far, within the limits of a sermon, in the discussion of such a theme. Before one could even begin to speak properly or to think comprehensively about the Atonement, one would require to have grasped some of the largest facts of life and to have penetrated to some of its deepest principles. I shall not have time even to state the whole of what is generally held among us on the subject—still less to refer to the difficulties which some of you may feel about it. The very idea of a reconciliation between God and

man rests on certain presuppositions about God and man, which I can only take for granted at present. All I can do will be to describe the broad lines on which it seems to me our thoughts on the subject should proceed, and without directly discussing difficulties, to indicate some point of view from which difficulties may be modified or disappear. You will not expect me to prove, on the spot, everything I take for granted; and you will not be surprised if I omit many things which you may afterwards think it would have been important to have said, or depart somewhat bluntly and abruptly from many lines of thought which it might be interesting to follow. In speaking, then, of the necessity for Christ and for His sufferings, I shall begin with what is simplest and least likely to present difficulties to any of your minds, and from it

proceed to what is more intricate and mysterious. And in the first place, I ask you simply to consider that Christ was necessary and His death was necessary for our moral salvation. Christ has given us both moral light and moral strength, both a new knowledge of our ideal and an inspiration to its fulfilment.

He has given us the knowledge of what we ought to be and do ; for let us remember that in the example of Christ we have a revelation of the holiness that is in being—of the holiness of God ; and in His character and way of living there is set before us the will of God, in which we were designed to walk—the character of God, which it is our supreme destiny to resemble.

But with this knowledge He has also given us an inspiration. His human life

is an inspiration. It has shown us what our life may be, in purity, in gentleness, in magnanimity, in self-sacrifice, and that there is nothing in our moral limitation to hinder a Divine perfection, nothing in our earthly surroundings to forbid the exercise of a Heavenly love. Still more do we find a moral inspiration in the thought of Christ as a manifestation of God (and whatever our idea of His Person, we cannot help seeing in Him a revelation of the powers that work in the world and a gift of the Giver of all things). And when we find Him caring so greatly for men, loving, above all, their souls, and desiring to make them holy, or when, even as our Teacher, He tells us of God's love and mercy, and, if only as God's servant (I am putting it still on the lowest ground), assures us that God cares for us, in a



like manner—that God also desires to see us good—then, I say, there does come to us through Christ a new moral inspiration and moral strength—the inspiration of the thought that God loves us, the inspiration of fellowship with God. Christ tells us that God loves us and longs to have us good; and it is easier to endeavour and strive, to deny the flesh for the spirit and resist temptation, when we have the good hope this faith gives, and when we have the support of a great sympathy, and the steady pressure of a purpose above our own. In these ways, the thought of which, at least, if not the experience of them, must already be familiar to us all, is Christ the agent of our moral salvation.

Now we shall begin (no more) to understand the place of Christ's sufferings in

His Atonement, if we will notice that even in His example and in His leadership and inspiration to the higher life His sufferings have their necessary part. We must remember what infinite blessings His death has brought to us—that it was first of all necessary to Himself that He should die. To be pure as He was, to live for righteousness as He lived, meant, in a sinful world, to die; and so if He died, it was first of all because He must be Himself, and because He must do His work. Only by turning aside, only by ceasing to be Himself (perish the thought!), could He have escaped what came. And so, if He was our example of righteousness, He was so most of all just then. If He showed us that perfect righteousness is perfect love, then we saw that love means love unto death. If He

interpreted the deepest meaning of life to be victory through suffering, self-fulfilment through self-sacrifice, and life through death, His own self-sacrifice was the supreme illustration of His own words. If He was to show us what human life may be, in His death He set the crown of love upon a perfect life, and realised the ideal supremely; and if His life was inspiring, still more inspiring was His death. Even to those who do not feel it as the love of God, Christ's death makes a commanding moral appeal. A cause, we feel, is hallowed by a great martyrdom; and at Christ's Cross the halo of suffering fell upon the cause of all humanity, all truth and righteousness were sanctified by sorrow, and the Kingdom of Heaven received its baptism of blood; while finally, if we take a love and a life like

His as the incarnation of the Divine Spirit, and consider it as a thought of God, then from Christ's sufferings there proceeds the overwhelming sense of a Divine self-sacrifice, and in a love unto death there is seen the revelation of the heart of God. Then, above all, then alone fully, Christ's death makes its great appeal and proves the power of moral salvation.

This then, I think, we shall all admit; and now, before proceeding further, I wish to make two other remarks of a preliminary character. One is this, that in thinking of Christ's sufferings we ought not to separate His death from His life. It is a very superficial observation on Christ's life and death to say that in His life He made the offering of obedience and in His death the offering of suffering. For His death was an

act of obedience, as His life was a life of suffering. On the one hand, I say, His death—that is to say, His faithfulness which brought His death upon Him—was an act of the will, an instance of obedience, of holiness, of conformity to the will of God; and on the other hand, whatever may have been His sufferings then, they were nothing to the sufferings of His whole life. Even of physical sufferings—physical privations—He had His share before He came to die. But it would be a coarse and materialistic thought to imagine that bodily sufferings were the worst Christ had to endure; and when we consider His mental and moral trials, we feel that they were the sufferings of a lifetime. He was not exempt all through His earthly career from such moral trials as perplexity, anxiety, and fear; and, as for the sorrow

that human sin caused Him, it came home to Him when His friends forsook Him, when the world rejected Him, when His disciples disappointed Him, when all His life through He saw men wilfully disbelieve in His Father, as well as in the last hour when sin made Him die. Thus, while for some purposes it is right to distinguish Christ's obedience—His own holiness—from His sufferings, we must never forget that they are only different aspects of the same life—that all His life through, His obedience brought Him suffering; and on the other hand, that all His sufferings and His death itself were borne in the spirit of obedience, and the spirit of holiness—in a perfect obedience and a willing holiness, which, in a real sense, turned these sufferings into joy.

The second remark which I desire to

make here is that the fact of Christ's suffering for others—His vicarious suffering, as it is called—is nothing unnatural or immoral, nothing outside or against the established order of nature or of moral life. I cannot dwell on this. I can only repeat that vicarious suffering, so far from being contrary to the moral order, is perhaps the deepest law of nature and of human life. Two laws run through nature and through life. One is that life comes through death; and the other is that life comes to one through the death of another. The first law is illustrated, in the physical sphere, by the fact that living is one continuous dying—that life maintains itself by perpetual decay and ceaseless change—and, in the moral sphere, by self-fulfilment through self-denial.

The second law, that life does come to

one through the death of another, is also illustrated in physical nature : it has its hard and terrible side in the perishing of the individual for the sake of the whole and for the future, its hopeful side in a continual process, making the other life and every life higher and more perfect. Through death and decay come growth and greenness ; and God "reneweth the fruit of the ground." Parents give themselves—either perishing wholly, or gradually laying down their lives—to give their children life ; and it is of no use to arraign as immoral a law so universal. In the moral sphere, too, this law is the very secret of all that is noble and heroic and self-sacrificing. Here it has no dark side, casts no dark shadow ; for morally the individual life that dies for others is not lost, but does truly fulfil itself and come to good. And certainly when thus, in human



life, to give oneself for others and for the highest is all that is great and heroic and blessed—is indeed the very essence of all morality—it is nothing unnatural and nothing strange that vicarious suffering should be the law of the life and death of Christ, and that we should find ourselves indebted to His sufferings for all things. If our pride is tempted to refuse the debt, we should remember that He must have the glory of the sacrifice. If self-sacrificing love is the noblest thing we know, then it must be in God. It is necessary that God Himself should be the supreme example of the Law of the Spirit.

We cannot be wrong in thus connecting Christ's vicarious sufferings with these laws in nature and in human life; for He Himself expressly interpreted His death by

analogies drawn from these lower spheres. He brings it under the law of life through death in nature, when He says, with express reference to His own death, "Except a corn of wheat fall to the ground"; and He definitely includes His own Cross under the general rule of moral life that "He that loseth his life shall find it." So too with the second law—that life comes to one through another's dying. As bread broken that men may eat and live so is He. And all human faithfulness, all human heroism is the type and shadow of His self-surrender. As a shepherd gives his life for the sheep, as a friend lays down his life for his friend, so He gives His life for many. So it behoved the Christ to suffer; so it was expedient that He should go away.

But now I shall ask you to come a

step further in the understanding of the necessity for Christ's sufferings. I have spoken of Christ as the door of moral salvation for men; and that He is. But Christ's way of saving men, His way of helping them in their moral struggle, His way of making them good, is to reconcile them to God. He brings men to an immediate present fellowship with God, that in that fellowship they may be saved, may attain their moral goal, may become what they ought to be. Christ has made fellowship with God the beginning and not the end of the moral struggle—its previous condition rather than its ultimate reward. Men have always been apt to think that God's friendship must lie at the end of long efforts on our part, when we shall have earned and deserved it. Christ entirely set aside this legal way of

thinking about our Father: our Father's love, our Father's friendship is given, He said, to all humble and willing hearts, quite independently of their deservings; it is given altogether irrespective of our moral condition. Now, the way in which the Gospel comes home to us practically in our experience is through the sense that it must be either in this way or never that God's favour is given; for all our experience and knowledge of ourselves teach us this, that there is no likelihood whatever of our being able, first or last, to deserve it by the perfect fulfilment of our ideal. If it were on these terms that it should be given, then never, we feel, would it be ours.

But there is a reason for this inability of ours. It is no mere accident that we cannot grow good without God—cannot, so to speak, without God's fellowship,

grow fit for God's fellowship. For we were never intended to live without God. God is the fountain of goodness, His presence the atmosphere of our spirits, His influence the source of all moral power. And herein lies the essential hopelessness of the legal way of seeking for God's favour or moral deliverance. We will wait, we say, till we deserve it, before we can receive God's fellowship. But it is only in God's fellowship that we can become what God would have us. To wait is to go on alone, without this help and salvation, and, for want of God's fellowship, never to come nearer to deserving it. Only in God's presence can we become fit for God's presence, only by His present help go on to fulfil the end of our being.

See, then, the dilemma, from which only unmerited grace can set us free: we do

not deserve God's friendship; yet without its redeeming and transforming power being given to us, we can never come to deserve it. The only escape from this hopeless position is that God should give us His fellowship now without our deserving it. The only way in which a man, to whom God's presence is the very breath of spiritual life, can either enjoy that presence unclouded or attain, through it, to moral salvation, is that he should be first received unfit, and in God's fellowship be made what God would have him to be. The only way is that we should be received altogether irrespective of our moral condition; and this is the salvation that is given to us; since "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."

Now, this of course implies the forgiveness of our sins, "God was in Christ, . . . not

imputing their transgressions unto them.”

I cannot speak now of the need for the forgiveness of sin. The cry for forgiveness has risen continually from the heart of man as often as he truly thought of righteousness and of God. Each of us knows he needs to be forgiven. But this is one of the points on which I cannot dwell further. Neither can I speak of the presentiment of the Divine forgiveness which has everywhere grown up in man's heart, and which in Old Testament saints rose to be so clear and certain. At last Christ ratified the hope and corroborated the faith in a God who received sinners and made them His friends. But now, with the certainty of God's receiving sinners, our conscience and our faith in God hold it as an equal certainty that God is perfect holiness and hates all sin.

God's hating sin, let me here remind you, once for all, is nothing contrary to His love. Because God is Love, He must hate sin : because He loves us, He cannot consent that we should sin. It is a complete mistake to oppose justice and mercy. Justice is simply love defending itself against its opposite. Love must oppose itself to selfishness. It must keep itself pure. So much as concerns the character of God. And then as regards ourselves, because God loves us He must seek to give us His best gifts—holiness, likeness to Himself. Because God loves us He must protect us from our worst enemy ; and our worst enemy is sin. Because He loves He must desire to make us perfect in love. Even among men indulgence does not pass for love. It would not be love to leave one who was



under your care to please himself and in pleasing to destroy himself. God cannot condone or make light of sin, both because He cannot deny Himself and because He cannot connive at our moral ruin. It is the sense of this, then, that has made men think we must please God before we can be forgiven. We must have something in us, it is supposed, to satisfy God's righteousness. Now, since Christ has deepened the human conscience, no one can suppose that he fully deserves God's approval; and yet Christ has awakened a great thirst for God's forgiveness. So the idea has been suggested that God lowers His standard somewhat, relaxes (in mercy, as it is thought) the demands of His law, and takes a partial goodness for the whole, so that we can do something to deserve our peace and thus, it is supposed, satisfy God's righteous-

ness. Others put it in this way, that God sees the end from the beginning, and takes our faith, which is the beginning of righteousness, as the equivalent of a perfect righteousness. This is legalism still, and it is a legalism which lowers and betrays the law. The only true and pure legalism is that which has no hope of forgiveness, but gives it up as for ever impossible. To say that God lowers the law and yet is pleased, that He takes a part and yet is satisfied, is to impugn the holiness of God, and to ascribe to Him the mistaken mercy of lowering the standard of the ideal. The only way, as I have said already, is that we should be received without our righteousness and without respect to our moral condition, in mere mercy and free grace. We are not righteous : that is our position ; and on that footing we come to God and

are forgiven. It is sometimes said that the Christian doctrine of forgiveness through Christ is a legal fiction—that we are called good when we are not good. We are not called good: we are sinners received and sinners forgiven, which is an entirely different matter. It is true we are received by God as much as if we were good. We have God's love as truly as if we were good; or rather because we could never possibly be good without God, He receives us as we are to make us good. But this is no legal fiction: it is God's grace to us. It would be a legal fiction, however, and an immoral arrangement, if we were allowed to suppose that part of righteousness satisfied God instead of the whole, or that God approved us because of our partial, our fragmentary, our really worthless obedience, because of our feeble, wavering, and all-

untrustworthy faith. We are received as not righteous ; we are forgiven as deserving nothing. "Not imputing their transgressions unto them."

What, then, becomes of God's hatred of sin? And what security is there that a forgiveness so absolute and so free does not mean liberty to sin? Righteousness cannot be required of us before we enter God's fellowship, or we should never enter and never receive that which alone has power to make us good. What, then, secures that righteousness shall rule in our life of fellowship with God? The answer to the question is in the righteousness of Christ. The perfect goodness of Christ stands there as a great reality. So does His perfect submission to suffering for sins that were not His own. In thought and word and

deed, in action and in suffering, in life and death, He maintained the spirit of perfect purity and complete self-sacrifice—with all the influence and power which such a life must have on the world and on the future and all that it is worth to God. These things must make a difference. They are part now of the sum of moral facts; and in their influence and meaning they enter into the constitution of the universe.

Then there were His sufferings. I have already spoken of the laws of victory through suffering, and suffering for others, and of how Christ submitted to them. In all His sufferings, so far as they were caused by sin—and probably all Christ's suffering, bodily, mental, and moral, can, directly or indirectly, be connected with sin—He submitted to the Divine law that suffering

follows sin. We must remember that His obedience, His oneness with the will of God, was exemplified in His sufferings ; and no doubt His sufferings receive their highest moral value from the perfect spirit in which they were borne, and His endurance of death through human sin and selfishness, from His unique sense of the greatness and guilt of human sin and His unique knowledge of the justice of the evils that followed it. Yet while this is so—while the moral value of His sufferings lies thus in the spirit in which they were borne and the mental acts by which they were accompanied—yet it was necessary that He should actually submit to the outward sufferings which are the consequence of sin. For they certainly exemplified and demonstrated God's holiness ; and by submitting to them Christ acknowledged God's holiness

in the most evident way possible. The physical sufferings and death of Christ are assuredly not the whole of the atonement (all His righteousness is the means to that); but they are an essential part of it.

The consequences of sin, as thus endured by Christ, declare God's righteousness, even although Christ knew no sin; for the suffering of the innocent through others' guilt, or the continued suffering of a forgiven man for past guilt, show us how there may be real suffering for sin without guilt or condemnation on the part of him who suffers.

Now, as I say, the spotless righteousness and the acknowledgment through suffering of the Divine justice and the eternal laws are real. They exist; and the moral situation is changed by them.

God—be it said with reverence—cannot act as if they were not. Nay, they are His own work. What difference, then, do they make? I answer first, that they make a difference to our moral future when we are forgiven, and second that they make a difference to God Himself.

First, then, I say the righteousness of Christ makes a difference to the moral future of those who are forgiven through Him. This is a point which, as I have already said, must be considered in our forgiveness. Believing in God's holiness, we really could not believe in a forgiveness which did not provide for this. I have shown that when Christ's righteousness is not taken into account, the only choice lies between a lowering of God's holiness and no possible forgiveness at all. God's forgiveness cannot mean that sin is palliated and excused. It



cannot mean that He is indifferent as to whether we are actually saved from sin or not. But to come to God through Christ for forgiveness does mean something as regards our future. It means to enter into fellowship with One as pure and holy as He is gracious and forgiving ; and it means to come under the inevitable power of a love that died for men. And it is true that God sees the end from the beginning, and sees in Christ a power to keep the soul from sin. With this forgiveness, then, there is given something to protect and to secure our moral future. It is not that we are accepted on the merit of our poor beginnings of goodness, which are no ground at all ; it is not our faith that is to be the means of salvation, but Christ's power over the heart, which is a very different matter. With regard, then, to what is

necessary for our own future, and our own moral salvation, and the fulfilment of God's design in us, we owe our reconciliation to the righteousness and to the sufferings of Christ.

Secondly, we must believe that Christ's righteousness and sufferings make a difference to God Himself. This is really only another and a deeper view of what has just been said; for whatever is necessary in God's dealings with His creatures has its necessity founded in some deep necessity of His own nature. And this at last is the deepest mystery of the Atonement of Christ. It would be presumption to speak glibly of "reasons" and "motives" here; but we are irresistibly led back to the thought that Christ's work was necessary to the preservation, untarnished and undiminished, of Supreme

Holiness, and to the consistency of God's own character. In this way, all is for His own sake, "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things." But with this we must ever join the other thought, that everything which thus was done and borne for the reconciliation of man and God was done by God Himself. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

Even with regard to human life generally, the Gospel teaches us to think of God rather as fulfilling His own purpose by His own activities than as holding aloof and rigidly, indifferently requiring His due. That certainly is the only true light in which to regard what Christ has done. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

To think of God, as so many theologies

have done, avenging in blood an offence against Himself and exacting from Christ, as one apart from Himself, what was due to His violated prerogative—this is to undermine in reality the foundation of the whole Christian belief that God was in Christ. The picture of Christ appeasing an all but irreconcilable God is as far from the meaning of Christianity as the other image of a price of blood paid to the Devil, which stood for the doctrine of the Atonement during so many centuries. Nay, the thought of opposition between God and Christ is even more contrary to the whole Christian revelation. We never once read in the New Testament of God's being reconciled to man, or needing to be so: His love, according to its uniform teaching, is the first fountain of all grace and the cause of all reconciliation.

The interests which Christ triumphantly secured by His righteousness and suffering were not those of wounded self-love, but of eternal principles of righteousness, which are identical with God's own will; and in Him who, by His utter love and most pure righteousness, has given us a salvation so free yet so complete, so open to every sinner and yet so full of salvation from all sin, we see God Himself fulfilling the aim of His creation—the God of nature and of human life, engaged in His highest and final work—“God in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself.” Through what Christ has done and suffered, we must all feel every one of us may be a better man. He laboured and suffered also, we can hardly deny, to bring to us the gospel of forgiveness and the Father's love. But to Christ's

righteousness we owe it, as I have also tried to show, that we can receive with our forgiveness such perfect peace of conscience and such certainty of moral salvation; and in accepting God's forgiveness can also see so plainly the holiness of God. It is true, then, that through the obedience and pains of Christ we are delivered from the guilt and burden of sin, and welcomed to a forgiveness full and free. We need do nothing for it: we can do nothing that would deserve it. It is simply the free act of God's mind towards us; and all that was wanted to make it right was done by God in Christ.

In the exalting and transforming friendship to which we are thus reconciled lies the new life; and in that life (since the very possibility of it is due to love like Christ's) love remains the characteristic spirit and

the permanent constructing motive; and holiness, which Christ so honoured by His life and death, the rule for those who seek with Him to be crucified and in Him to live.

---

*Printed by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd., London and Aylesbury.*

THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY  
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

A 25038









BX Douglas, Andrew Halliday, 1864-1902.  
9178 Five sermons / Andrew Halliday Douglas ;  
D6 with a biographical introduction by Charles  
F5 Douglas. -- London : Hodder and Stoughton,  
1903.  
vii, 323p. : port. ; 21cm.

1. Presbyterian Church--Sermons. 2. Douglas, Andrew Halliday, 1864-1902. I. Douglas, Charles, 1865-1924, ed.

CCSC/mmb

A 25038

A 25038

